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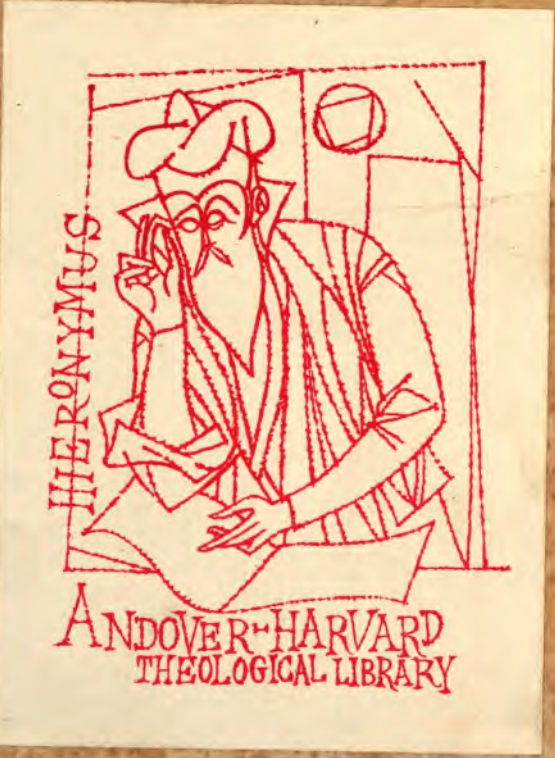

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SERMONS,

ON

PHILOSOPHICAL, EVANGELICAL,

AND

PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

DESIGNED FOR THE

USE OF VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS OF CHRISTIANS.

BY THE

REV. ELI MEEKER.

ITHACA:
PRINTED BY MACK & ANDRUS.
1827.

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PREFACE.

THE following work is designed particularly for the use of individuals and families, whose volumes are few and whose reading is not extensive. And for the purpose of rendering it the more useful, a considerable portion of six interesting subjects is taken from the writings of men so eminent, that publick utility is offered as an apology for thus presuming.

A few other particulars have been selected from other authors. It is hoped the selection of subjects and their illustration, will interest many who are not professedly pious, as well as edify the most devout Christian. As a large number in this vicinity have become subscribers for the present volume with the expectation of its containing considerable variety, exertions have been made not to have them disappointed. The present and future well-being of man, is the object for which these sermons appear in print. The author humbly hopes, his labours in preparing this work for publication, will in some degree prove useful for the promoting of its designed end; therefore, it is presented to the publick.

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

The original and present state of the world contrasted.

Genesis i. 31. *And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.* 9

SERMON II.

Identity of the human race.

Acts xvii. 26. *And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.* 20

SERMON III.

Man urged to act worthy of his dignified nature.

1 Kings ii. 2. *Show thyself a man.* 33

SERMON IV.

Envy one of the basest passions of the human breast.

Esther v. 13. *Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew, sitting at the king's gate.* 48

SERMON V.

Reflections on the devotion of the higher order of intelligences.

Isaiah vi. 2. *With twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.* 59

SERMON VI.

Little things blight the fairest prospects of man.

Solomon's Song ii. 15. *Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.* 70

SERMON VII.

Man admonished of his duty by inferiour creatures.

Proverbs vi. 6. *Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise.* 81

SERMON VIII.

Human activity, a means of obtaining blessings from God.

Mark iii. 5. *Stretch forth thine hand.* 94

SERMON IX.

The value and use of money.

Ecclesiastes x. 19. *Money answereth all things.* 107

SERMON X.
The service of God and Mammon impossible.
Matthew vi. 24. *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* 113

SERMON XI.
Desirable effects of a preached gospel.
Mark xvi. 15. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.* 129

SERMON XII.
Joseph's affection, seasonably manifested, worthy of imitation.
Genesis xv. 4. *I am Joseph, your brother.* 142

SERMON XIII.
A vain curiosity reproved.
John xxi. 22. *What is that to thee? follow thou me.* . . . 153

SERMON XIV.
Zion's trials and prospects.
Psalm xlviii. 12. *Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof.* 165

SERMON XV.
Origin of the Christian name, and success of Christianity.
Acts xi. 26. *The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.* . 176

SERMON XVI.
Man fearfully and wonderfully made.
Psalm cxxxix. 14. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* . . 188

SERMON XVII.
True religion all important.
Isaiah xxviii. 20. *For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.* . 219

SERMON XVIII.
Neglect of present duty the ruin of man.
1 Kings xx. 40. *And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.* 231

SERMON XIX.
The path of human happiness.
Psalm iv. 6. *There be many that say, Who will show us any good?* . 243

SERMON XX.
Little things make up the character of a man.
Luke xvi. 10. *He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.* . . 257

SERMON XXI.
On Justification.
Romans iii. 24. *Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* 373

SERMON XXII.

Death and the intermediate state.

Ecclesiastes xii. 7. *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God, who gave it.* 299

SERMON XXIII.

The resurrection of the human body, and wonderfully glorious change.

1 Corinthians xv. 53. *This corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality.* 329

SERMON XXIV.

Ministers of the gospel, encouraged to hold forth variety as a prominent trait in their publick discourses.

Matthew xiii. 52. *Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.* 356

APPENDIX.

Explication of the term Nature. 397

Explication of the term Law. 399

SERMON I.

THE ORIGINAL STATE OF THE WORLD FAR MORE EXCELLENT AND DESIRABLE THAN THE PRESENT.

Genesis i. 31.

And God saw every thing, that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.

THESE words present us with the view which the Lord had, when his works of creation were completed. And they are represented to be glorious and excellent; worthy of a Being supremely wise and good. Mankind readily discern and acknowledge that some of the divine works bear evident marks of divine goodness; and they are ready to conjecture, that some are not stamped with wisdom nor benevolence. But the Creator himself has declared them all not only to be good, but to be very good. All the works which God created, in six days, have, in the view of infinite wisdom and goodness, been considered as superlatively excellent; and as such they are announced to man, who should view them in the same light. Doubtless, one reason, why mankind are no more astonished and affected with the displays of the wondrous goodness of God in his works of creation, is, that they have such limited or scanty views of the divine works, consequently they are unable to discern to a very great extent the supremely benevolent design. The more any one becomes acquainted with cause and effect, and the more he is enabled to search into the nature of things, so far as man is capable, by contemplating the works of nature; the more is he led to see and admire infinite wisdom and goodness.

Another reason, why many do not see, that every thing which the Lord has made, is very good, is, that they confine their views to the world and its inhabitants as in a state of condemnation and not in their original state. They do not consider how very different the appearance and reality of things were, before the flood, and especially before the entrance of sin into the world. The earth and every thing that pertains to it, are materially changed and under the curse of God in consequence of the sin of our first parents and of the sins of the world. By contrasting the present and the original state of God's works of creation, our views may be enlarged concerning the divine goodness. Let me repeat the words of the text: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Thus the great Creator viewed his works, on the sixth day, when the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. They not only as a stupendous system exhibited the wisdom and goodness of God, but every part both in the natural and moral creation was admirably designed to manifest the being and perfections of Jehovah. Infinite wisdom and benevolence devised the wondrous scheme; and almighty power gave existence. As the Lord is by nature invisible, so the manifold works of creation are the book of nature, in which finite intelligencies may read, and form consistent and exalted views of his true character. In the illustration of the present subject, but few things can be noticed. The object will be to show, that the original state of the world both in a natural and moral point of view, was far more excellent and desirable than the present. Scripture, reason, and probability are to be the aids to establish the point. Man and his varied situations and relations will constitute the chief part of this discourse, though not exclusive of the material world and the animal creation.

1st. The goodness of God will appear very con-

spicuous, if we consider the soul of Adam, the father of the human race, in its original state, as he was created on the sixth day. As the soul of man is the most excellent part of any of the works of this lower world, so we should naturally conclude, that it would be the nearest resemblance of its Author. And with such a conclusion the following, scriptural account is in entire accordance. So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him. The Lord is a Spirit, or an intelligent Being, whose understanding is infinite. The soul or intelligence of man is finite, a mere image of the omnipresent, invisible Jehovah. And as the Lord is infinitely holy, and most righteous in all his ways, so we are taught, that God, made man upright. Thus all mankind bear the natural image of their Maker, as they are intelligent beings; and our first parents were created after his moral image in a state of perfect holiness. How happy then must have been such a state; how much resembling that of the holy and blessed angels. The soul of Adam was doubtless more capacious than that of any of his offspring; and his means of improvement and advancement must have been far superiour to those of any of his fallen race. This is evident from the consideration, that sin introduces natural evils, mental as well as bodily. Whether our first parents had a language, suited to their original state, implanted in their very natures, and innate; or whether the Lord thus furnished them in a supernatural manner, we cannot tell. However, that they had such a language and correspondent knowledge, reason would teach as well as scripture. The description, of Adam's giving names to all the animals of the earth, will throw much light on this subject. Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam, to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name

thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field. The idea which some entertain, that Adam though very happy, had but little knowledge, is entirely groundless, and every way inconsistent. It is founded perhaps on the expression of Satan, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." But what must be the proper import of such a temptation? Truly this. Eat of the forbidden fruit, and your extensive knowledge and enlarged views will be supernaturally augmented; and ye, who are but little lower than the angels, will at once be equal to them. The serpent, from dread experience, knew, that the suggestion of the highest possible attainments of knowledge, would be the most likely to excite ambition in the heart of one of a capacious mind, and of clear and sublime views. Aspiring to be gods, angels fell; aspiring to be angels. man rebelled. But the race of Adam have souls inferiour to him, in consequence of the diseases both of the mind and of the body. How extensive the capacity, how great the knowledge, how holy and happy must have been our first parents, whilst in that blessed situation, the garden of Eden! When we consider the soul of Adam in a state of innocence, a living, holy image of its Creator, the divine goodness shines conspicuously; for the Lord himself saw, that it was made very good.

2nd. If we compare the human body in its original state and present condition, the divine wisdom and goodness will be very manifest. No doubt Adam had the most regular, bodily form, and the most beautiful and interesting countenance of any mere man, that ever lived. Then, not only the human soul, but the human body, was in a state of perfection. Then, was man the immediate offspring of God, and he breathed air so pure, that his body was not subject to sickness and mortality. By reason of sin every manner of disease and

death itself have entered the world. Hence, the beauty, vigour, and activity of the human body are greatly degenerated. Irregular forms and features, constitutional diseases and the prevalent distempers of mortals, finally all bodily infirmities, are the effect of human apostacy. This, and more than this, is implied in the expression, dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. Human bodies are become corrupt by irregular, sensual desires, by sinful passions and vitiated appetite. All the affections and passions of man in his original state were for good; and his reason and appetite were in perfect unison. But how sadly reversed the present state! Constitutional sins originate chiefly from the irregularities of the human body; hence the minds of many are excited by what is denominated the right eye sin from some of the defects or irregularities of the animal frame. Many have their minds greatly beclouded and deprest nearly all their days, on the account of some local complaint, or perhaps a variety of bodily maladies. But the healthful and vigorous body of Adam, and the perfect state of the various senses, would be almost constant inlets of entertainment, and sources of joy. Had he not apostatized from God, his body would never have fallen a prey to death, but would probably have been translated, or instantly changed into a spiritual body, like the bodies of Enoch and Elijah, and like the change that shall be produced in those, that shall be on the earth, at the time of the sounding of the last trump. Originally the human frame was a most beautiful temple, containing a perfect, human soul. But now it is a decaying tabernacle, inhabited by a degenerate, apostate spirit. Not only was the soul of man made after the image of God; but a most perfect human body was formed to be its suitable companion and partner. This is fairly infered from the expression, behold, it was very good. Then we may see, that far more excellent and desirable was

the original than the present state of the corporeal system, and how conspicuous the goodness of God!

3rd. The world itself in its original state was pronounced superlatively good, and as such should be viewed by man. The earth in its pristine state was a globe beautifully formed, and well calculated for the support of animals, and for the convenience of man. In its present state it is greatly altered, and wonderfully changed from what it once was. Its surface is far more irregular and rugged, than it was when pronounced very good. Inundations and earthquakes have made havock with certain parts of the world. The flood especially has desolated the whole surface, and produced many dreary mountains and awful gulfs. We read of high hills and mountains, before this catastrophe; but they would not compare with the present. They would not be too stately to render a most agreeable variety either to charm the eye, or to be most productive. In consequence of sin not only the moral but the natural world is greatly degenerated; for the earth itself is cursed for man's sake. We may well bless the Lord, that we have the earth, his foot stool, even in its present state for our abode; but, yet, how must it once have been far more excellent and most desirable.

4th. The condition of man and all things around him were originally very good; but in his present state they are greatly reversed. Adam had a garden, whose soil was most fertile; and all the requisite labour would only serve to render him healthy, active, and cheerful. Delightful his situation! for out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree, that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food. Though we frequently behold the face of nature clothed with verdant beauty; yet its scenery was once far more beautiful and delightsome. But how are labour and vexation, sorrow and grief, now visible throughout the world, which lieth in wickedness. Awfully true the denunciation, Cursed is the

ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it, all the days of thy life: Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field: In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground. Then the unpleasant excesses of climate, and the infected atmosphere are a judgement from heaven for man's transgression. For the same reason the beasts become savage towards one another and towards man. How submissive were they and inoffensive before the fall! Now, many of them are ready to destroy man, the lord of this lower world; and they fear him not only for his intelligent countenance but also for his wicked looks. The beasts of the field and even the elements are now hostile and set in array against him. When considering the manifold miseries of this life, does any one imagine, that the divine goodness is greatly eclipsed? This subject will teach him to contemplate the world and all things therein, on the sixth day, when the Lord pronounced them all very good. Then will he behold the beauties and wonders of paradise; and the same state would have continued to this day with glorious improvement, had not sin entered this world. The evils and direful calamities of this life must not be a reproach to the divine goodness but to man. His revolt from his supreme Lord has immersed him in all the miseries of this life and exposed him to the woes of the life to come. But notwithstanding the sins of the world, through the divine grace, mercy and forbearance of God, how manifold is the divine goodness, what a continued series of varied favours does heaven confer even on the evil and unthankful. Yet how much brighter was the original state of things, when all were perfection, were superlatively excellent in the view of God.

IMPROVEMENT.

1st. If this subject has reflected some light on the works of creation concerning the goodness of God,

then it may be proper to make a few observations concerning the necessity and excellence of divine revelation, which will be a farther manifestation of the divine goodness. When we consider, that the great, first cause has not only given existence to matter, but also to mind, we may conclude, that a revelation from God to man is possible. Surely he, who created intelligent beings, can reveal himself to them, or excite ideas in their minds by his immediate agency without the intervention of means or second causes. The same power, which created the human mind by an immediate, positive agency, can furnish the mind with clear and distinct ideas by the same agency, which is implied in the term, revelation. And truly a revelation from God to man is very desirable. Our first parents, in a state of innocency, might reason from the works of creation and providence, that their Creator is great, powerful, intelligent, and benevolent; and that they ought to love a being so glorious and munificent. But, without a revelation from God, it does not appear, that they would know, how they should worship him, that they might express their love in the most suitable manner: Neither could they know, whether their Creator designed them for immortality. And, if they should believe this, they could not tell, whether this world would be their eternal home, or whether they should enter another state of existence. When they felt hunger, they might draw some rational conclusions, that it would be lawful for them to partake of the fruits of the earth for their support; but could they safely infer, that they might take the beasts of the field for food? How could they determine with certainty, that the animals of the earth, although in different grades below them, were not rational, accountable, and immortal creatures? Even in the primitive state of uprightness a revelation was desirable and needful: but far more so, since mankind are in a fallen, blinded, and ruined condition; for it makes known the only possible way of salvation. Would we be sensible of the great importance of a

divine revelation, we should not only turn our thoughts to those who enjoy it, and all the advantages arising from it; but we should contemplate the deplorable situation of those, who are destitute of its enlightening influence. That many of the nations or tribes of the earth, are, at present, in a benighted, forlorn condition, no person of information can deny, and the same might be said concerning all past ages. When we consider the strange worship of Heathen nations, and their base and scandalous sacrifices, for the making of an atonement for sin, that they may pacify their offended deities, we have existing evidence of the necessity of a divine revelation to point out to lost man the way of salvation. Without such a divine gift, fallen, guilty man could not certainly tell, whether a holy and righteous God could forgive sinners; or, if he could, whether he would grant pardon, and on what terms. They could have no certainty merely by repenting; and they could not possibly tell what atonement would be necessary. This required wisdom far beyond that of men or of angels. Moreover the contents of the sacred writings serve to evince their divine original. The things revealed are perfectly credible and consistent, and form an extensive and harmonious scheme. The doctrines and duties revealed are not repugnant to the law of nature, but consonant to reason and conscience. Finite, short sighted man may imagine, that the sacred volume contains many unnecessary things, that are not worthy to be included in a revelation from God. But, although some make objections to the sacred writings, because they do not exactly accord to their notions; nevertheless they do the same concerning the works of creation and providence. And as they do not see the wisdom of many of the works of nature, hence an argument may be derived in favour of the authenticity of the sacred writings; because they were given to man gradually and analagous in a manner to the other works of God.

Also from the fulfilment of prophecies may be derived a convincing argument to show, that revelation is truly divine. Finite beings can only conjecture, they cannot certainly foretell what things or events will come to pass. To have a perfect view of futurity, or to foreknow the events, which are to take place, is the prerogative of Deity. Hence the completion of the prophecies carries convincing evidence, that the writers were divinely inspired. Many important events, and to human view improbable, have been foretold and fulfiled, even in the minutest circumstances. Moreover many important miracles have been wrought as a confirmation of the reality of revelation being divine. Miracles were effected on publick occasions, and they appealed immediately to the senses of men, as this was the highest kind of evidence, which could be given or demanded. They were wrought for very important purposes, and they tended to show, that the messages which the inspired penman delivered, were revealed to them from heaven, and should be received as coming with the declaration and authority of Jehovah.

2nd. This subject may lead us to see the odious nature and destructive tendency of sin. How has it changed both the moral and natural world, and what dreadful devastations has it made. What a sad alteration has it produced in the condition of man, and in the very animals as well as in the earth itself. Every groan, or painful sensation, and all the woes of the earth, announce sin to be exceedingly sinful. They are not mere calamities sent upon feeble and innocent mortals, but the judgements of heaven, upon an ungodly world, who seek any thing *rather than to know, love, and serve the only living and true God.*

3rd. How are gratitude and praise due to God. What a mercy, that man, ruined by sin, may be delivered from its dominion here, and from its curse hereafter. What a privilege, that the soul may be renewed by grace, enjoy the communion of its maker,

and, at last, be for ever blessed with the fulness of his love. Is any one afflicted with the various calamities of life? How should hope beam in his soul, that he may be delivered from temporal and eternal evils. How should he seek to be an inhabitant of the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, and where all things are in perfection the most consummate and glorious. *Amen.*

SERMON II.

IDENTITY OF THE HUMAN RACE.

Acts, xvii. 26.

And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.

THE word of God is indeed a treasure of goodly pearls. In its vast resources may be found the richest jewels, and the most costly diamonds. To the cultivator of the earth it presents a field of immense value; and to the merchant, the choicest goods, and the most durable riches. To the wise are exhibited rich stores of hidden wisdom; and the simple are invited to receive instruction, and lay hold on understanding. Beauty and sublimity adorn its sacred pages, and invite the scholar to come, improve his taste, and attain the highest refinement of his mind. In the divine word the hungry soul may obtain the choicest food; the weary find rest; and the thirsty, drink of the waters of salvation from the river of life. The poor may be made rich; the beggar wear a crown; and frail mortals be clothed with glorious immortality. The sacred writings abound with the most able instructions, that we may wisely order our conduct in time; but their chief value must be estimated from those important truths, which relate to eternity. All the doctrines and duties, taught in the Bible, are harmonious. They are all closely connected with each other; and necessary to form a complete system, that man may be instructed in all those things which may exalt the dignity of his nature. And no general truth can be taken away, without breaking the great chain of

revelation. In the words of the text, with those in connexion, we are taught the identity of the human race. God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples, made with hands; neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things: And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth. These words teach us, that all mankind, throughout all the world, are of the same origin: Or, in other words, That God created Adam and Eve, and that from them the whole human race have descended. But mankind exist under such different varieties of stature, of complexion, and of features, that we might be led to conclude, they are not all of the same descent, had we not the word of God for our guide. In establishing the identity of the human race, I shall in the first place, contrast some of the peculiarities of the human body with the bodies of the animals of the earth. And the vast difference *between them will be an argument in favour of human identity.*

1st. The figure of the human body is essentially different from all animal bodies. Throughout, it is a more completely organized and finished piece of divine mechanism. Man, as it respects his animal frame, evidently holds the first rank in relation to the species of animals. He is distinguished from them also in a very striking manner by the erectness of his form. See the beasts naturally bending towards the earth, as if created for the purpose of grovelling in the dust, and solely its kindred. But see man from the erectness of his posture by nature, looking towards the heavens, as if of higher birth, and destined at last to soar on high. By an infinite number of muscles and articulations in the structure of the human frame, man is capable of a far greater variety of easy movements, and useful purposes, than any of the animal tribes, particularly in the

nicer operations of the arts, without which they could neither have been invented nor practised. The human body in its various members, and in the symmetry of the whole, exhibits remarkably pleasing and elegant proportions. Its adaptation to perform delicate and useful operations, plainly evinces the intention of the Creator to favour the cultivation of all the arts, necessary for the purposes of life, for convenience and ornament. The varied clothing of the animals of the earth are in direct contrast to that of man. All animals are clothed by the gift of nature; but the garments of man are the work of art. And this is one mark by which they may easily be distinguished. Thus we may be led to see by contrast, that the figure and condition of the human body are strikingly different from all animal bodies.

2d. The human countenance is essentially different from that of any of the animals. Some animals have a visage far more engaging than others. But how insignificant the appearance, compared with the beautiful and interesting countenance of a human being. Some animals by their looks discover docility; some, cunning; and others, sagacity. But intelligence, with far superiour paintings, is delineated on the fine and delicate lines of the human countenance. The variety of ideas and emotions continually arising in the mind, communicates to the countenance a habit of quick and various flexibility, which renders it capable of expressing suddenly upon the features, every thought. Says Doctor Smith, expression, in a low degree, belongs even to the animals. This we know; for we see them brighten with joy, and gambol with pleasure: they languish in sickness, and writhe in pain. Their eyes sometimes sparkle with love, or flash with rage: and even the tear of distress may be seen to roll down their cheeks. But the expression of the human countenance is incomparably more various than that of any animal. Such is the mysterious union and sympathy between the human soul

and body; that in the delicate and flexible human countenance, there is hardly the slightest movement or emotion of the mind, which has not its external character or symbol. Thus even the looks and features, though a silent, are an impressive language. Time will not allow me, to treat of the diversity and beautiful intermixture of colour, and its varied changes in a human countenance, which, by contrast, we discern to be evidently and strikingly different from that of any of the animals.

3rd. The human voice is a criterion, by which man may be readily distinguished from any of the animals of the earth. Speech is the prerogative of man, and of which no animal can be taught to participate. Animals can make those varied sounds, which are necessary to call their young, or to give them warning of their danger. But the power of communicating thoughts by words belongs to man alone. No animal has ever had the faculty of speech; but all the tribes of mankind have enjoyed this gift. Language, as to the characters and structure, is different in different nations; but the great end is the same in all, to express the thoughts of the mind by words. The voice of man, in singing the praises of his Maker, is far superiour to the musical sounds of any animal both for melody and sentiment. The birds of the air warble their pleasant notes; but they have not the power of articulate harmony. Vocal musick is impressively instructing, and highly pleasing. Let us call to mind some person, that is dumb, or deprived the gift of speech, and then we may have some just views of the vast superiority, and striking difference, which exist between the power of the human voice, and those mere sounds of nature, of which animals are capable. The gift of speech, with that of musick, is one of the greatest blessings both for entertainment and benefit, ever confered on man, as it respects his animal frame. And although animals can make sounds, necessary to their situation; yet

the human voice is a criterion, by which man may be readily distinguished from any of the animals of the earth. I shall proceed in the second place, directly to establish the identity of the human race. And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth. This expression teaches us, that all human beings upon the globe have the same kind of animal life. But the present discourse is designed, from natural and moral causes, to reconcile those varieties of figure, of features, and complexion, which exist among the human species. Some of the principal varieties in the aspect of mankind will be noticed. And I would observe in the first place, that the Esquimaux, the Laplanders, the Samoiedes, and the northern tribes of the Tartars, have their head and breast uncommonly large, the neck uncommonly short, the eyes, hands, and feet uncommonly small. The cause is doubtless owing chiefly to the climate; as they live in the northern parts of the globe, in which regions intense and almost perpetual cold reigns. The natural effect of a climate so cold, is to restrain the growth and expansion of the limbs most remote from the centre of warmth and circulating heat in the body. The natural consequence is, the size of the hands and feet are greatly diminished; whilst the head and breast, which receive the most forcible impulse of the blood, will be proportionably enlarged. And as the head and breast are so greatly expanded, the neck is apparently shortened. Moreover the inhabitants of those cold regions are habitually raising their shoulders to protect their necks from the uncomfortable effects of intense frost and cold; and their heads seem to rest on their breast, or sunk down even below their shoulders. This appearance is what gave rise to the fable of tribes, who had no necks. But should any of us be removed to those regions of the north, we should readily contract their habits, and by the intensity of the cold, should begin

to be assimilated to them, and in a few generations should partake of all their peculiarities. For illustration, suppose a tree, in a warm climate, to have a long and slender body, and very extended limbs. Let a young shoot of the same be transplanted to a cold climate, and re-produced for a few centuries; the body of the tree would become much shorter and thicker, and its branches not so extensively spread. In consequence of the unremitted constriction of cold, a particular habit of body, or disposition of features becomes incorporated into the system, and gives a form to the person, and lineaments to the features more or less strongly marked, as far as the cause is found to operate. On this same principle we may account for the dark and brown complexion, and the coarseness and roughness of the countenances of the inhabitants of the frozen regions. Their rough and harsh features are the natural result of the corrugations and distortions occasioned by the climate. In our own climate when a person is exposed to the severities of a bleak, north wind in a severe, cold morning, for only one hour, how is his visage changed by a momentary roughness and brownness. Coarse living, unpolished society, and severity of climate are reasons sufficient to account for all the peculiarities and irregularities of complexion, features, and stature, which characterize the inhabitants of the regions of the north.

2d. I shall now take a view of some of the fairest complexions of any people upon the globe. But such inhabitants must be found where climate is congenial by its temperature, and where the cultivation of the arts and sciences is carried to its greatest perfection. Some of the Europeans and the Americans in the United States are intended. Their residence is in the northern, temperate zone, where climate is favourable to a fair and ruddy complexion; and where learning and polished society are calculated to produce lively and interesting features in the counte-

nance. The inhabitants, have by no means, uniformity in all respects; as their circumstances and opportunities are greatly varied in the same country. Some local situations, states of society, and modes of living are more favourable than others for the exertion of the mental powers, for refinement of manners, and for forming constitutional habits and complexion. And where a people have long cultivated the arts and sciences, and refined manners with success, a general aptitude becomes hereditary among their descendants. Thus this influence and these effects will in some degree be communicated from posterity to posterity. Birth and education not only peculiarize different nations, but different societies and families. The distinguished privileges, salubrious climate, and manner of living, give the superiority of some nations over others for stature, features, and complexion.

3d. The Jews will be next taken into consideration. The idea, which some entertain of their existing with the contrast of colours white and black, is incorrect. It is not proper to divide them into the two classes of white Jews and black Jews. They are dispersed through every country in the world; and they have four differences of complexion: the fair, swarthy, olive, and black. In whatever region they are found, they are marked with the common complexion of the natives. The Jews who live in Britain and Germany, and who are the descendants of past generations, have an intermixture of a fair and ruddy complexion, nearly resembling that of the English and Germans. Those of Spain and Portugal are swarthy, but little varied from the complexion of the Spaniards and Portuguese. In Syria, they, like the Syrians, are nearly of an olive colour. But in India they are said to be black. However, they have not the African black, although their complexion is peculiarly dark. But to what shall we ascribe these very different shades of complexion, if not to the varieties of climate, manner of living, and other con-

comitant circumstances. They are known to be descendants of one family, and to have but very few intermarriages with other nations. The manner, in which the Jews are found to exist in different countries and climates, may serve to show, that there may be great differences of feature and complexion amongst mankind even from natural and moral causes. Hence a strong argument for human identity, that all are the descendants of our first parents.

4th. The blacks of Africa and their descendants in other nations, will demand our attention. Their sullen and dejected looks, and their coarsely wrinkled visage present a picture of the effects of a fervid sun upon the head and body. The silly and idiotick countenance, which is frequently observed in the wretched natives of Africa, evinces the effect of the pain, and the faintness, occasioned by the intense rays of a vertical sun, beating upon them. Do they appear inferiour to some, compared with our own highly favoured nation; and scarcely worthy to be ranked among human beings? But what might not these degraded creatures be, in a few centuries, were they to possess our situations of climate, society, and mental improvement? In considering this class of mankind, let us consider them as inhabitants of the torrid zone, and brought up in poverty of diet, degrading ignorance, and filthiness in the manner of living, which tend greatly to debase the corporeal system, and debilitate the mind. A peculiarity of the Africans, which deserves to be noticed, is, their hair resembling wool. But universal experience demonstrates, that climate has a powerful effect upon the hair, fur, or wool of all animals, to render it coarse or fine, spare or thick, according to the temperature of the region, in which they are found. Why should not similar results be experienced by the human race, when exposed in like manner, as are the Africans. Neither is this a dire calamity of chance; but the care of a benevolent providence appears to be

exercised towards the natives of this fervid zone. Doctor Smith says, The covering of their head is a substance that is, properly, neither wool nor hair, but somewhat between them which is more comfortable to the head than either. It serves to protect the brain from the intense ardour of the sun, and does not, like hair, imbibe the perspirable moisture from the skin, which would render it, in that hot region, extremely unpleasant to the feeling, and unsafe to the health. The colour and curl of the hair depend in a great degree, upon a certain excrescence of that secretion in the skin, from which it derives its nutriment. Also, the evaporation of a volatile gas, rendering the surface quickly dry, and disposed to contract, while the centre continues distended, necessarily produces an involution or curling of the hair. It may be inquired, How comes the hair of the Africans to be so universally black? I answer, other tribes or nations of the torrid zone have black hair almost universally.

Another peculiarity, which should be mentioned, is the complexion of the Africans being so black, so very widely different from that of the inhabitants of this country. It should be kept in mind, that the colour of the inhabitants of the torrid zone, is generally black; modified, however, by various circumstances, such as the elevation of mountains, the vicinity of seas, and being open to wholesome or to scorching winds. As we advance towards the equator, we discern successively the various grades of dark complexion, from the swarthy to the blackest hue of the human skin. The features are most coarse and harsh in rigorous climates, and in a state of savage or barbarous manners, as among the natives of Africa. That climate possesses a powerful influence on the complexion of nations, we may infer from the effect of the solar rays upon the human skin in our own mild and temperate latitude. Take, for example, a pair of twins in childhood, of fair and

ruddy complexion. Suppose them to have so near a resemblance to each other as scarcely to be distinguished, even by the mother. The one is continued in school, and when out of the house, sheltered from the various inclemencies of the weather. But the other, spends his childhood in the labours of the field, exposed to the excesses of heat and cold. The one, in his youth, has the opportunities of Academies and a College for his improvement and refinement. The other, passes the days of his youth in the occupation of a sailor, and in the most barbarous ignorance. At the age of twenty, what a contrast of features and complexion! Whilst the one has an interesting countenance and delicate fairness, the other is deeply tinctured with a rough and swarthy complexion. But let the climax be continued. Instead of the partial exposure, to which the latter is subjected, by the short duration of our summer heats, suppose these were continued through the whole year with the same intensity. Add to this, that his situation be in the ardour of the torrid zone, to endure the rigours of the burning sands, and scorching, infectious winds. Moreover, let him be continued a few centuries, by progeny, in the interiour of Africa. What would be his sad appearance, what his dismal complexion! By this comparison we may be led to conceive, that the blackness of the African hue is not greater than might be expected from the force and continuance of natural and moral causes. But, besides the discolouration produced by the direct rays of the sun, naturalists inform us, that the effect of a torrid climate is very powerful on the action of the liver, the great laboratory of bile in the human system. And as it is increased in quantity, it is said to heighten the black hue of the skin. These observations serve to show that the peculiarities of the African race are consistent with human identity, or that they are of the same blood of the other nations of the earth, the descendants from the same first parents. It may be

replied, these arguments would be deemed sufficient, if it were not a matter of fact, that our own climate does not alter the complexion of the Africans, for they continue to remain black. But our northern, temperate climate does materially change the features and complexion of those, of the third and fourth generation. Though they hold their blackness, they have not that deep, gloomy, and sullen hue, which is a characteristick of those, who have lately come from Africa. Then if climate and manner of living do effect a change, though but slowly, instead of an objection against this subject, it is an undeniable argument in its favour. But how long would be necessary to re-produce an entire change? The reversion of any constitutional habit, features, or complexion of the body, would demand a much longer space of time in order fully to counteract them, than the acquiring that habit would. If the Africans have been one thousand years in reaching their present state, probably fifty thousand years would be necessary to effect a complete reversion.

REFLECTIONS.

1st. This is an instructive and important subject, worthy the attention and serious consideration of all to whom it is addressed. Does it appear new or novel to some? The subject is as old as the Bible, and as ancient as the creation of the first human pair. It is as interesting as the present prospects and future destinies of human and accountable beings to the bar of God. It is deeply interwoven and essentially connected with the whole of divine revelation. How important is it to have an indisputable line of distinction made between the highest grades of the animal creation, and the lowest class of human beings. The whole volume of divine truth is addressed to man, and whether high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, black or white; all their peculiarities of situation have a bearing on the great

judgement-day. Are any disgusted with the view of the debased and humble state and lot of some of the human race? Rather let humility possess their souls; and let them give due praise to the Author of every good and perfect gift, for their elevated rank, and exalted privileges. It is truly an interesting and most solemn reflection, that so many millions of human beings as have peopled the globe, and as now dwell on all the face of the earth, should have their genealogy from that once holy and happy pair, whose abode was paradise. How vast, astonishing, and manifold are the works of God, and how worthy the study and admiration of man, who is made after his image.

2d. If the identity of the human race is established, then all mankind are brethren. They have all the same original parents; are all one family, made of the same fellow clay. They all partake of the same human flesh and blood; have common wants and common interests. They have all the same human principles implanted in them by nature; and are each one accountable to the same Judge for the improvement of his talents, and for all his moral conduct. Do we sometimes behold a fellow mortal of inferiour, bodily and mental accomplishments? perhaps a black slave? We may well exercise the feelings of compassion and sympathy, for such an one is our brother. Blood as precious as ours, runs through his veins. He must die; and after death, be an inhabitant of heaven or hell, as well as we. Yes, my hearers, as we have souls to be saved or lost, so have all our fellow mortals, however varied their complexion or condition, *and in whatever part of the habitable globe they live.* Then

3d. How desirable that they enjoy privileges in common with us. How friendly, that we should reach forth a helping hand, to raise those, who are sunk into the lowest depths of human degradation. Can we highly prize our privileges, and not feel

anxious that the destitute enjoy the same blessings? How would the face of the moral world be brightened, if all nations and tribes enjoyed the social, civil, and religious privileges, which heaven has confered upon us. The face of nature would seem to be changed, whilst pagans and heathens would be exalted in point of privilege.

4th. My friends, this subject calls loudly upon us for the exercise of gratitude and thankfulness. It is God, who has made us to differ from those classes of human beings, who are brought into the world under circumstances far less favourable. His sovereign and gracious providence has placed us amidst a nation highly enlightened; whilst some of our kindred, grope in civil ignorance, and dismal, moral darkness. We may well exclaim in the view both of climate and every endearing privilege: Our lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage. Contrast our situation with some of the tribes and nations of the earth; and then feel the force of the expression, Exalted to heaven in point of privilege. With weight, then, we are addressed, and this subject demands of us a song of nobler praise. What civil and religious liberty do we enjoy; whilst others of the same blood, groan under the chains of civil and religious bondage. Then let hymns of praise and songs of joy abound. Let God be glorified and exalted in our hearts, to whom alone are praise and glory due. Conscience points all the tribes of mortals to a God; but the gospel points out the way to heaven with far brighter rays. In time, may our theme be gratitude and thankfulness; and in eternity, may our nobler strains be glory to God in the highest for the unspeakable blessings we now enjoy. *Amen.*

SERMON III.

MAN URGED TO ACT WORTHY OF HIS DIGNIFIED NATURE.

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1 Kings, ii. 2.

Show thyself a man.

THESE words are the charge of a dying father, to a surviving son. They were addressed by king David, to his son Solomon, who was to succeed him on the throne, and be king over Israel. Solomon was, at this time, about twenty years of age; an early period for him to enter upon so weighty a charge, as the government of God's people. But, as he was endued with extraordinary wisdom, David exhorted him to show all Israel, though he was but a child in years, he was a man in capacity and attention to business, and qualified for the elevated station, to which God would shortly raise him. Now the days of David drew nigh, that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong, therefore, and show thyself a man: And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes and his commandments. This is an address truly worthy, from an aged king to a young prince; and worthy the consideration of all human beings.

The doctrine to be drawn from the words of the text, is this: The conduct of man should be such as becometh rational and accountable beings. To illustrate the subject, I propose first, to point out some of the characteristicks of a human being. Second, show how human beings should conduct, would they show themselves men, or act as becometh rational and accountable beings. Therefore I proceed in the first

place to point out some of the characteristicks of a human being. And I would observe, that the terms man and human being are synonymous expressions, and designate the highest order of being upon the earth. An inquiry is sometimes made, whether man is an animal or spirit. But a direct, affirmative answer, to either of the interrogatives, would not be correct. No single term will answer the definition, as the two natures, which are essentially different, must be united to form a correct idea of a human being. The impropriety of calling man an animal, will appear, when we consider that the soul of man is far the most excellent and noble nature. The impropriety of calling him a spirit, may appear, when we consider that the idea of a human being, necessarily includes an animal frame.

Therefore 1st. Man, or a human being, is compounded of soul and body, of intellectual and animal nature. His soul, as it respects its nature, or its natural faculties, is akin to angels. It is made lower than they, both as it respects its station in the universe, being placed on the earth, the footstool of the Deity; and as it respects its capacities not being so enlarged as those of the angels. Angels are spirits, so is the soul of man a spirit, though possessing powers and station inferiour to theirs. As it respects the body of man, it is a complete animal frame, and is kin to the animals of the earth. Its very nature is matter, as it is formed of the dust of the earth, is subject to pain, disease, and death. In this respect the body of man has no pre-eminence over the beasts of the earth. Its superiority over them, arises from its being of a more delicate, beautiful, and noble frame; from its erect posture, its admirable figure, its countenance, most expressive; but especially from its being a subject of resurrection, and of transformation into a spiritual body. Hence, the peculiar propriety of calling man the uniting link in the great scale of being, between the animal world, and the world of

spirits. Not merely because he partakes of the natures of both; but, also, because whilst his superiour nature is inferiour to the powers above, his inferiour nature is superiour to the other animal natures upon the earth. As the body of man consists of various members and senses, capable of performing the actions and offices, suited to its corporeal nature; so the soul consists of several faculties, which sustain and discharge a variety of offices, suited to its intellectual nature. Divines make some variation in the enumeration of the several faculties of the human mind. Some class them in the following order: perception, reason, judgement, and will. Others into the following: perception, memory, reason, and conscience. An inquiry and dispute have long existed, respecting the part of the animal frame, in which the soul is seated. Some maintain, that it has its seat or place in the brain, as that is peculiarly the seat of sensation. Others think, that it is seated in the heart, as that is peculiarly the seat of affection and will. Perhaps, it is impossible to ascertain or point out the local situation of the soul in the body. But, its seat of influence, even the peculiar seat of the influence of its several faculties may be known even by a child. Perception, memory, and reason have their seat of operation and influence in the head or brain in a particular manner; as is evident, from the various operations they perform, affecting, particularly, that part of the bodily frame. Conscience has its seat of influence in the breast; as is evident, from the pleasure or pain that is experienced, from the discharging of its office, in approving or condemning. The heart is the seat of affection, whether of love or hatred; and of the will, whether of good or evil. Having made some observations concerning man as a being compounded of soul and body, of an intellectual and animal nature, I would proceed to bring to view,

2nd. Some of the various and interesting views, in which the human soul may be considered. And

to man, especially, the subject is a pleasing and interesting theme. That the human soul is a thinking, intelligent substance we may readily discern, by turning our thoughts to the immediate transactions of the mind, or towards those varied, external operations of man, which are evidently the effect of intelligence. Reflections and conclusions, plans and schemes, stamped with intelligence, and carried into effect, bespeak a designing, intelligent agent. But the human soul is not only endued with intelligence, it is gifted with power also. It is the mind, which, at its pleasure, causes the muscles to be braced to raise the arm, or to move it in any direction. And how strikingly is the power of the human soul displayed, in a time of imminent danger! How suddenly are the body and its members in a posture of defence! How quickly and powerfully exerted!

An inquiry is sometimes made, Whether the minds of mankind are not entirely similar, except that some are more capacious than others. But another inquiry, with greater propriety, might be made, Are not human souls as varied in their native qualities and natural dispositions or geniuses, as human bodies are? Whilst we grant that any peculiar, constitutional, animal frame has its particular influence over the mind, to be consistent, we must grant that any peculiar, constitutional frame of mind has its corresponding influence over the body. We behold some minds more moderate and careful than others; some, more hasty and rash; some, more social and engaging; and some, more discerning and profound. And we can discern these varied, native dispositions of the human mind, in all the varied, constitutional peculiarities of the human body. No one can show, that Deity could not bring into being as great varieties of mind as of matter. Reason and observation unite to convince us, that the minds of men are greatly different and varied from one another, both as it respects their native quality and inherent disposition. The human

soul is capable of great activity and enjoyment; and it is also subject to fatigue and pain. At one time, it ascends to the stars in contemplation, and to the heavens in enjoyment; at another, it descends to the lowest depths of stupour and distress. In the present state, it is like the body and all sublunary things, continually varying or changing. An inquiry is naturally suggested, Why is the human soul said to be immortal? One reason is, when the body becomes lifeless and inactive, entombed in the silent grave, the soul looses not its sensibility and activity. Brought into existence not to die, but to survive beyond the end of time, and to flourish in immortal bloom.

With this view we may conclude, when all the infirmities of disease and tottering old age enfeeble the body, the soul does not decline, or fail in point of its natural capacity. It is only beclouded for a season, from displaying that vigour and lustre, which it would do, were its decaying frame changed into a healthful and active body. Hence we may discern the vast superiority of the one over the other.

3d. It is a characteristick of a human being to be lord of this lower world. By divine appointment, not only the vegetable kingdom, but the animal world is subservient to man. The birds of the air, the beasts of the field, and the fish of the sea, are under his controul both for his support and convenience. The Lord said to man, The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth, shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. According to this divine grant, that reason or intelligence with which man is endued, not only renders him far superiour to the animals of the earth, but it brings them all under his subjection. Although some of the animals are far superiour to man in corporeal strength; yet they learn obedience to him, and are at his disposal. See

the horse, that noble animal, daily serving man for his profit and comfort. The generous ox, after performing the labours of the field, yields his owner his flesh as a rich repast. The harmless sheep is taken for food and clothing. These examples are sufficient to illustrate and show, that man is lord of all below.

4th. Man is a being, capacitated for great and noble actions. His capacity both bodily and mental have enabled him to rear astonishing and lasting monuments of his power and skill. The labours of thousands of individuals are handed down in history as wonders to the world. But lofty pyramids, vast bridges, extensive walls and canals, display but a small portion of the genius and ability of man. We must survey every part of the habitable globe, from the beginning to the end of time, would we discover how vast and astonishing are the effects of his wisdom and power. Shall we say, this power has founded the most magnificent cities, erected the most superb edifices, leveled mountains with plains, and turned the course of rivers? Yea more than this. For wheresoever any traces of the art and power of human beings can be discerned there may we also discern the effects of the intelligence and power of the mind, which render the body its instrument, which bring to its aid all mechanical powers, and which effect all the wonders of art and labour, that any human being has ever beheld. The natural, literary, and moral world can furnish innumerable instances of the greatness and nobleness of human conduct, which does honour to human nature. Both sacred and profane history hand down from posterity to posterity, examples of human beings truly magnanimous, worthy of admiration and imitation. Without bringing to view any particular names we may readily discern, that man is a being capacitated for great and noble actions.

5th. A human being has capacity for endless pro-

gression in knowledge, holiness, and happiness. A being to exist for ever, and to behold more and more of the works of God. The pre-eminence of the human soul over the spirit of the animal creation, is great, both from the consideration of its native, superiour excellence and its immortality. Whilst the one goes downward or perishes with the body, the other goes upward, for ever expanding in eternity. Arguments from reason and analogy may be drawn, to show that the future existence of human beings will be far more enlarged and dignified than the present. All the transformations of vegetables and animals in the present state, serve to confirm this idea. And as the human body is to be transformed into a spiritual, glorified body; so will the human soul be advanced with it, its faculties enlarged, dignified, and suited to its exalted state. Hence man is capacitated for endless progression in knowledge, moral excellence, and felicity, which is the perfection and highest dignity of his nature. It is the prerogative and perfection of Deity, to be infinite in knowledge, benevolence, and blessedness. And it is the perfection and highest glory of created intelligences to be capable of endless improvements, and to resemble more and more the Author of their being. Having pointed out some of the characteristicks of a human being, the way is prepared to show in the second place, How human beings should conduct, would they show themselves men, or act as becometh rational and accountable beings.

And I would observe the first thing they have to do, is to cease to do evil, and learn to do well. There are none, who have not gone astray, for the word of God asserts, The whole world lieth in wickedness. And how does it become man to refrain from every ignoble and debasing act, which degrades his nature, and to cultivate all manly and noble virtues, which are consonant to his important station. Let him that has stolen, steal no more. Let those, who im-

prudently have wounded the feelings of a friend, or injured their neighbour or themselves by their evil ways, be watchful for the future. Whether mankind have transgressed in a greater or less degree, the voice of wisdom calls to immediate reformation. Aged sinners and bold transgressors may well forbear; and surely, since youth are rational and accountable beings, they should readily turn from that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good.

2d. Would mankind show themselves men, they should be honest in their dealings with one another. It is a common proverb, that honesty is the best policy. This may be a good reason for uprightness in the common transactions of life; but a still better one can be given. It is morally fit and suitable, that we should regard the welfare of others as our own. Whatever reasons we can allege in behalf of our own welfare as it respects the comforts of this life, the same can be alleged in behalf of the welfare of others. They have wants in general with our own selves; and have as delicate sensibility of pain and injury when wronged or defrauded. And unjust dealing often brings natural evil, as well as moral guilt. Peace of conscience, individual happiness, and the publick good, demand all men, not only to look to their own welfare, but also to that of others. In all the common contracts and pursuits of mankind towards each other, would they consult mutual benefit, how many evils would be banished from the world. Peace, prosperity, and moral fitness call for uprightness between man and man in their daily intercourse. And since they are rational and accountable beings, they should ever be mindful of the golden rule, As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them; for this is the law and the prophets.

3d. Temperance becometh rational and accountable beings. It is not my design in this place to bring to view the loathsome spectacle of persons in the most degrading state of intoxication. Neither to

draw a picture of wretchedness in consequence of fortune squandered, and families reduced to extreme poverty. It is sufficient, to hint upon the human wo with which earth is filled in ten thousand ways, in consequence of profuse, excessive intemperance. It may be observed, that the Lord designs that man should eat, and drink, and enjoy the good of his labour. But to abuse the divine bounty, by daily excessive eating or drinking, is not only sin against God, but destructive to happiness and ruinous to the soul. Intemperance, though not carried to the greatest excess, is a barrier to the most refined feelings of literary and social life, and a shield to prevent divine truth from having its proper force on the mind. The truly temperate, have superiour advantages of present comfort and usefulness. Duty, present enjoyment, peace of conscience, and prospects of futurity, call upon man as a rational and accountable being, to live temperately.

4th. Those, who would show themselves men, will be careful to avoid evil speaking. Speech is one of the great means of communicating ideas from man to man; and various are the arguments, and powerful the motives, which might be offered to dissuade from slander. It should be avoided; for it is a great perversion and abuse of the tongue. This little, but important member, was designed for social and interesting conversation, to promote the dearest interests of society, and to proclaim the praises of the Author of nature. But how lamentable the perversion, when it is drawn forth to slander, instead of giving counsel to the ignorant and wandering, of encouraging the timid, of consoling the afflicted, and promoting the peace and happiness of individuals and community. Shall it be said, That words are a cheap gift? And shall not they be granted, when they can promote human felicity in ten thousand ways? Or shall evil speaking be indulged, and shoot forth instruments of cruelty, like fire-brands, arrows, and

death? Man should refrain from the practice, as it manifests a low and base spirit, and is the dialect of the region below. When any one is active, in exaggerating the faults or failings of others, and of spreading them abroad, a low mind is characterized. A man of noble mind and generous sentiments, would rather commend, than defame his neighbour. His liberal soul would shrink, at the thought of the painful and degrading task. Moreover, those who are addicted to evil speaking, are generally paid by retaliation. They who are censorious and bitter towards others, have the same measure meted out to them again, and frequently pressed down and running over. If the person injured, should not retaliate, yet others see the failings, and will publish the faults, of those who render their tongues instruments of injury to their fellow men. Then from motives of policy, a prudent man would guard his tongue against slander, lest he be repaid in the same base coin. Evil speakers destroy their own peace and comfort. They frequently reproach in the heat of passion. But, in time of cool reflection, how are they frequently pained with keen, self mortification. When they behold the person, whose interest they should have viewed with tenderness, but whose character they have sought to injure, how will shame and conscious guilt fill their breast, bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder. Thus inward peace is destroyed, which is of more value than rubies. They who are ready to seize every opportunity to speak evil of others, will find no time for their troubled souls to rest. They may discover so many faults or failings amongst mankind, that before they have thoroughly circulated one slanderous report, they will be hurried with another. Every man should ever be careful to guard his tongue, from the consideration that the pernicious effects of evil speaking on individuals and community, can never be remedied. They, who publickly injure others by slander, put it beyond their

power to prevent the injury from spreading, even if they should truly repent of their evil conduct. Like the main-spring of a watch, or like the principal wheel in some complicated machinery, which moves various other wheels, so one tongue frequently excites to motion ten thousand other tongues. And what is the ability of a slanderer, even though penitent, to prevent the evils which he has done, from spreading wide, like a raging pestilence? How pleasing, how benignant, how extensive are the goodly effects of speech, when properly directed. But how sad, how melancholy, how pernicious its devastations, when perverted.

5th. Would men conduct as becometh rational and accountable beings, they will not take the name of the Lord in vain. Profanity is a sin highly provoking to God, and offensive to every serious or refined mind. No person, who continues in a course of profane swearing, has any ground to expect forgiveness of his transgression. Hear the injunction; Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain. It would be painful to hear the name of a worthy friend used on every trifling occasion, in a foolish and disgusting manner. But how guilty, how hardened must he be, who with the greatest levity will trifle with the sacred names of the supreme Being? Rather let horrour seize the soul, and confusion cover the face of a human being, than that the lips should belch forth cursing and blasphemy. Perhaps we may expect to hear the drunkard and abandoned profligates bid defiance to heaven, and profane the name of God; but shall persons of refined manners, shall parents, shall magistrates be guilty of profane swearing? Then shall the land mourn, and the prospects of the rising generation be darkened. How foolish and wicked, how unbecoming and degrading to a rational accountable being, is the taking of the name of the Lord in vain.

6th. They, who would show themselves men, will be forbearing towards one another. Who is there, who does not need the forbearance of his fellow men? Or who is there, who has never transgressed, or never injured any of his fellow mortals? Unless one can be presented, who is perfectly free from censure in all his ways, the duty is universally binding. But how does the world abound with offences from faults and failings; and how suitable the exhortation, Be ye kind, forbearing one another in love. Without mutual forbearance, the sweets of social life would be greatly embittered and society dissolved. How compassionate, forbearing, and long-suffering is the Lord towards a sinful world! Well, then, may frail, mortal man, both from interest and duty, be forbearing towards his fellow mortal.

7th. Human beings should not consider it beneath their dignity to reverence and worship their Creator. Shall beings, bound to the judgement-bar of God, cast off fear and restrain prayer before him! Shall holy angels fall prostrate and worship day and night continually in his presence? And shall man exclaim, What is the Almighty, that we should serve him; and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him? Be astonished, O heavens! And tremble, O earth! Not only revelation, but the light of nature, reason, and conscience, call upon all human beings to show themselves men rational and accountable, and to reverence and worship their Creator and final judge.

8th. Would mankind conduct as becometh rational and accountable beings, they will not be ashamed to embrace and profess the gospel of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Since all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight. But, because salvation cannot flow to mankind as to holy beings who never fell, shall they not rejoice in the way of salvation by grace, and in the

title of redeemed sinners! Rebels may well be ashamed of their crimes, which degrade their natures; but how unbecoming for criminals to spurn at the idea of repentance and pardon. The doctrines and duties of the gospel are most reasonable; and how honourable must they be to make children of wrath, heirs of heaven. The crown is fallen from the head of man by reason of sin. But it is only through the gospel, that he can be crowned with glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. The glorious gospel of Jesus Christ is worthy of rich and poor, bond and free, noble and ignoble. But shall we despise that, which is worthy of all acceptation? Ashamed of Jesus! yes, I may, when I have no sins to wash away. Man's highest interest for time and eternity, the honour and glory of God, forbid that human beings should be ashamed to embrace and profess the gospel of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

IMPROVEMENT.

1st. From this subject we may infer that a most pleasing and sublime idea is necessarily included in the contemplation of a human being. What a pre-eminence has man over all the creatures of the earth! How elevated his station, and how abundant his means of improvement and enjoyment. And how solemn the thought that a human being is born to die, and born for immortality! That whilst the animal frame is mouldering to dust with its kindred earth, the soul is with kindred spirits in a world unknown. And what vast scenes will yet be presented to every one of the human race. Though the eye may never be satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing in the present state, yet every soul will be satisfied with the vast scenes of the conflagration of the world, the general resurrection, and the final judgement day. Must every human being be a companion of holy angels or of the spirits of

darkness for ever? Such a reflection should fill our minds with solemnity. The scenery of this life is truly wondrous and majestick; but boundless scenes await us. Hence the very idea of a human being, is a thought of inconceivably vast importance.

2d. We may see how unwise and foolish all must act, who will not show themselves men, by conducting as becometh rational and accountable beings. A contrary course is attended with vanity and vexation of spirit. Departures from the path of rectitude and rationality are attended with disappointment, pain, and remorse. Human beings, who have reason, conscience, and the word of God, for their direction in the path of duty and life, must have a painful task, to bid them defiance and act irrationally. Surely it is a folly for any to continue in sin, merely because they have transgressed. And if any feel the weight of aggravated guilt, why should they continue to increase their hardness, and still add to their treasure of wrath? Should any of us at last sink down to wo, it will not be merely because we have sinned, but because we still persist in iniquity. In view of past errours and follies, then let us learn circumspection and wisdom for the future. They who refuse to conduct as becometh rational and accountable beings, cannot meet the approbation of their judge; but must reap the fruit of their own doings.

3d. We may see from this subject, that the responsibility of human beings must be great. As their station in the great scale of being is elevated, so they have opportunity of doing much good, by wisely improving the talents entrusted to their charge. They who have knowledge, wealth, influence, or any other talents, should improve them as wise and faithful stewards of their Lord and Master. In what station so ever we are placed, we are not to act merely with a view to our own ease and interest, but for the good of community. Opportunities of education and religious instruction, natural and

acquired abilities, the calls of Providence and conscience; all social, civil, and religious means and privileges, will be brought to view at the great day of retribution. And who does not feel that his responsibility is great? Even though some have far more extensive opportunities and privileges than others, who can say that only one talent is committed to his charge? But whether we spend our probationary state in the ways of wisdom or folly, our responsibility will at last appear to be great.

4th. We may see what encouraging and goodly prospects to all those who are walking as becometh rational and accountable beings. So far as any thus walk, so far they pursue the path of true happiness. They are pursuing their present peace and comfort, and future even everlasting blessedness. They have no reason to be weary in well doing, for shortly they will hear their Saviour's glorious plaudit, Well done good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord. What a glorious recompense of reward! We can put no bounds to the knowledge and felicity of such, but infinity itself. For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of the joys which God hath prepared for those that love him. They will not only be for ever free from pain, and complete in bliss; but they will be for ever making nearer approaches to the fountain and source of moral excellence and blessedness. After millions of ages shall have rolled away, their knowledge and joys will rise higher and higher. Motives and prospects of infinite weight to induce mankind to conduct as becometh rational and accountable beings. *Amen.*

SERMON IV.

ENVY, ONE OF THE BASEST PASSIONS OF THE HUMAN BREAST.

Esther, v. 13.

Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai, the Jew, sitting at the king's gate.

THESE words are the confession of Haman; and they are recorded as a reproof and warning to all mankind. The history concerning him and Mordecai is a lesson, fraught with instruction, to show how sudden and how great may be the changes either of human exaltation, or human abasement. Haman, on the one hand, through envy, experienced a most degrading fall; and Mordecai, in consequence of his uprightness, was raised to very distinguished honours. Haman told his friends of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. He said moreover; yea, Esther, the queen, did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared, but myself; and to-morrow, I am invited unto her also with the king. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew, sitting at the king's gate. What then! The envious man resolves not only on the destruction of Mordecai, but also on the entire extinction of the Jews, his kindred.

My object, in this discourse, will be to show, that envy is one of the basest passions of the human breast, and dreadful in its effects. But what is envy?

Envy is that affection of the human heart, which grudges to others that respect or prosperity, which is supposed to attend them. Or envy may be said to be a sensation of uneasiness and disquiet, arising from a selfish heart, in view of the advantages of others, and accompanied with malignity towards them. Rachel envied her sister Leah, because of her fruitfulness. Joseph's brethren envied him, because his father loved him. Saul envied David, because he considered him as a competitor for the crown. Haman envied Mordecai any honour, because he hated him. And the Jews envied Paul and Barnabas, because they preached the gospel. But the nature and effects of envy will be more clearly pointed out, by showing from various considerations, that mankind should not harbour this monster in their breast.

1st. They should guard against envious feelings towards one another; because they are unreasonable. As it respects moral motives and actions, it is the province of reason to point out the advantages or disadvantages of any course of moral conduct. But what are the benefits arising from envy, either to individuals or community? Surely neither envy nor its operations were any real gain to Haman or his friends. The same melancholy truth may be said concerning every individual, who has been guided by envious feelings. The brethren of Joseph, Saul, and Haman, had sad experience to convince them, that envious feelings and envious treatment of others, were most unreasonable. And at the present day, they who cherish a spirit of envy towards others, whether towards those whom they hate, or towards their enemies, will, to their cost, reap the reward of unreasonable doings. To envious men the advantages of others, prove their disadvantage. Why was not Haman contented? and why did he not richly enjoy the favours confered on him? One reason he assigns in the words of the text: All this availeth

me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai, the Jew, sitting at the king's gate.

2d. We should not be envious towards others; because, this spirit reigns only in low, selfish minds. A person of a generous and noble disposition, will rejoice at the prosperity and felicity of others; but an ignoble and envious soul is grieved and chagrined in view of their success and happiness. Whilst a liberal man exercises sympathy with his fellow men in time of their distress, an envious and base man is delighted with their calamities. Envy is not confined to persons of low circumstances in life; but boasts of the rich and great as her votaries. The prosperity and elevation of Haman did not secure him from exercising envious feelings of the most degrading nature, and that in the view of the peace of one whom he scorned to notice. But the more elevated his station, the more selfish and contracted must be his mind, to be filled with envy towards one whom he considered as his inferiour. Those who possess the spirit of Haman, have a most selfish spirit. Persons of benevolent feelings would be glad in view of what made him sorry. The enlarged soul is pleased with the prosperity of superiours, inferiours, or equals. But how contracted must be the mind to be grieved and sad in view of those things that ought to yield it enjoyment.

3d. We should guard against envy; for it is not merely against our fellow men, but it is against the providence of God. The Lord has not only the keys of life and of death in his hand; but he giveth the kingdom to whomsoever he will. It was divine providence, that rendered Joseph so beloved by his father, and raised him to be governour over all Egypt. Therefore his brethren, in envying him, murmured against God. It was an invisible hand that raised David to the throne, and that caused favour to be shown to Mordecai. And Saul and Haman had hearts irreconciled to the Supreme disposer of events.

When any feel envy rising in their breasts in view of the natural talents, rank, or affluence of others, let them reflect, that the Lord exalteth, and he casteth down. It is the providence of God, that distributeth favours to the righteous and to the wicked. Then whether competitors, superiours, inferiours, or enemies be envied, let the inquiry be made, who hath crowned their labours or enterprises with success? To be envious towards others in view of their advantages or advancement, is to be unwilling that the Lord should reign, and dispose of the works of his hands as seemeth good in his sight. Then why should we ever be envious towards our fellow men; or be uneasy, and fret against the providence of God.

4th. We should guard against an envious spirit; because an envious man is detested by all. Mankind abhor the one who cherishes a passion so base in his breast. Envy is so evidently repugnant to all religious or social enjoyments, that an envious man is avoided, disesteemed, and detested. But how is the spirit of envy to be discovered? By the conversation and conduct of a man. How easily is the spirit of Haman to be discerned? Would any be esteemed, let them show their good will towards their fellow men; for an envious man is to be shunned, and will be abhorred by his fellow men.

5th. The spirit of envy should not be harboured in our breasts; for it is the very temper of the region below. In the abodes of wo, where all restraints are removed, this deadly monster rages to an awful degree. But in the land of hope let all the social virtues be cultivated; and let not man endeavour to resemble as near as possible the fiends of darkness, by yielding his heart an abode for envy. The region of wo is filled with envious spirits; for it has not a solitary inhabitant but what is under its dominion. Then let not mankind yield themselves its servants; and cultivate the temper of the region below.

6th. The first risings of envy should be resisted;

for it dries up all the comforts of the envious man. How did the brethren of Joseph mar their own enjoyments by their envy towards him? This spirit excited such hatred in their breasts, that they could not speak peaceably with him. Envy laid waste the comforts of Saul, although he was clothed with royalty. And hear Haman, though in the midst of prosperity and grandeur, exclaim, Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai, the Jew, sitting at the king's gate. The neglect of an individual more than counterbalanced all his affluence, and put an end to his enjoyment. Though a nation trembled before him, and did him reverence; yet because this Jew refused to bow unto him, envy filled his soul with impatience and malice. What a trifling incident this, so completely to destroy a man's peace. And how in ten thousand ways are envious men liable to be discomposed from the most frivolous circumstances. How small a matter can spoil all the satisfaction of the envious, even if they have reached the summit of human greatness. Immense riches, glory, and honour, gave not Haman so much pleasure as he felt pain from one man's disrespect. How soon are all the comforts of an envious man blasted.

7th. We should guard against envy; because it leads mankind to all manner of external crimes. What but envy enkindled the breasts of Joseph's brethren with the design of taking away his life! And how easily did this spirit persuade them to sell their brother to be a slave in Egypt. How did envy inflame Saul to seek the life of David, his benefactor, and to whom more than once he was indebted for the preservation of his own life. Haman not content with seeking he life of Mordecai, determined on the destruction of the whole Jewish nation. Says Solomon in his Proverbs, Wrath is cruel, and anger outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy? It makes men turn into every debasing, unnatural shape to injure others. The wisest and most upright

persons cannot escape the effects of envy. In the Ecclesiastes, Solomon says, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. An envious man would gladly wound the feelings of others; would injure their reputation, and prostrate with the dust all their goodly prospects. No excellence of character, no amiable qualities, are a shield to ward off envious weapons, and secure from harm; for envy will lead mankind to all manner of external acts of wickedness.

8th. Mankind should not harbour the monster, envy, in their breasts; for it draws down retaliation and vengeance on its own head. Let us attend to the confession of the brethren of Joseph. And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, spake not I unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold also, his blood is required. When their souls were overwhelmed with distress, how readily do they impute their sufferings to be in consequence of their unnatural and envious deed towards their brother. Divine vengeance pursued Cain for slaying his brother Abel, in a very signal manner. It was for envy, that he slew him. But God set a mark upon Cain; and he was a vagabond upon the earth. And for his envious and murderous act, hear him exclaim in agony of soul, My punishment is greater than I can bear. In these instances the divine hand is particularly to be noticed as an avenger of envy. But, in others, the hand of man more evidently renders vengeance; and frequently the very designs which envious people form in order to promote their own honour, and to injure others, draw down shame and ruin on their own heads. This was strikingly exemplified in the affair of Haman and Mordecai. Haman thought in his heart, To whom

would the king delight to do honour more than to myself? And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal, which is set upon his head; And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour. Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai, the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail, of all that thou hast spoken. Then took Haman the apparel and the horse and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour. How great must have been the mortification of Haman to have all that honour, which he had pictured for himself, confered upon Mordecai whom he envied and detested. How must he have felt himself degraded to be his lackey and herald, and to proclaim before him through the street, that the king was delighted thus to honour him. And now let us turn our thoughts to the gallows of seventy-five feet in height, which Haman had caused to be reared for Mordecai, and contemplate his sad disappointment. Harbonah said before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then let not the monster envy have a residence in our hearts; lest it draw down vengeance on our own heads.

9th. We should guard against an envious spirit, for envy prevents the blessings of heaven, and torments the soul where it dwells, like death. The spirit of grace and an envious spirit, cannot possibly reside in the same heart. Envy more effectually secludes any gracious affections of the soul, than locks and bars can secure a castle. Light and darkness have not a greater contrast than the nature of the spirit of envy, and of that spirit which alone prepares for heaven. Envy, like a vulture preying upon the vitals, is sickness and death to the soul. Says Job, Wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one. By this expression we are taught, that the inward torments of envy are death to the soul, as the taking away of animal life is the death of the body. Solomon says, A sound heart is the life of the flesh, but envy the rottenness of the bones. This expression shows, that the mental wounds of envy are deep and destructive. Thus it prevents the blessings of heaven, and torments the soul where it dwells, like death.

10th. We should not harbour the direful monster, envy, in our breasts, lest it should for ever reign in us to a dreadful degree in hell. Surely an envious man must be in the road to death. And by cherishing an envious spirit, he is fast preparing as a brand for the burning. Whilst some men are evidently preparing for heaven, so an envious man is emphatically preparing for hell. Envy is one of the most fiery ingredients of torment in the region of despair; for it is exercised in the view of the most consummate felicity of all the inhabitants of heaven. All who cherish it are preparing to be for ever filled with it, against the blessed God, and all his saints and holy angels.

IMPROVEMENT.

1st. Is envy so evil in its nature, and dreadful in its effects, as we have heard? Then the proverb is true, Let envy alone, and it will punish itself. It is so disquieting, restless, and tormenting in its very na-

ture, that it needs no opposition to render the envious person wretched. It is self tormenting; and in its very existence it is inseparably connected with unhappiness. The envious man is not only punished in consequence of his evil doings, but he punishes himself. Envy, not only as it respects the future, but also for the present, biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. All the arguments of this discourse, which have been offered to show, that envy is one of the basest passions of the human breast, and dreadful in its effects, serve to prove the truth of the assertion, Let envy alone, and it will punish itself.

2nd. In the view of this subject we may see, how reasonable and glorious are the doctrines and requirements of the gospel. They are all according to moral fitness; calculated to promote the peace and joy of individuals, and the highest good of community. How safe and excellent the precept, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self. And how benevolent the injunction, Look not every man on his own things, but also on the things of others. As far as the requirements of the gospel have their due influence on the minds of men, so far they enjoy a heaven below. As a selfish, envious spirit experiences in some degree the pains of souls in wo; so a benevolent mind has some fore-tastes of the joys of heaven. How reasonable and glorious, then, the doctrines and duties of the gospel.

3d. We may be led to see from this subject, how necessary for the true happiness of fallen man, that he be born again; that sinful passions be not only restrained, but subdued by grace. Mankind may do much for their own comfort, by checking and restraining unruly passions; but their reason is unable effectually to subdue them. Instead of cherishing anger, hatred, envy, malice, and revenge, they may cultivate all the amiable, social virtues. But these will not answer as a substitute for gracious affections. It is the spirit of God alone, which can erradicate the

seeds of wickedness from the heart, and implant those graces which are essentially different in their nature. Grace can subdue the passions, can give new vigour to our social feelings, and implant that love which is the fulfilling of the law.

4th. We may be led to see from this subject, that great must be the pains of hell, even from the direful ingredients of a wicked heart. When all the evil passions of the human breast are no more confined by restraints, but burst forth in all their ungovernable rage as in the region of despair, how wretched must they render the sufferer. How will they prove a gnawing worm, an unquenchable fire, to the soul. How painful and distressing are the stings of envy, malice, and revenge in the present state, even though but for a moment, and held back by restraints. But how intolerable must it be to endure the unrestrained rage and torment of all the sinful passions of a wicked heart, in that place where hope never cometh. Even in this life, the malignant exercises of only one of the human passions against an individual, is sufficient to destroy the comfort of any man, and render his moments wretched. Yet this is only a small portion of torment, a mere spark of those unquenchable flames which are enkindled from all the direful affections and passions of the finally impenitent against all holy beings. Thus we may see, that great must be the future torments of the wicked, even from the direful ingredients of their own heart.

5th. By contrast we may be led to see, that great must be the joys of the righteous in the future world, even from a benevolent heart. Benevolent, friendly exercises of heart, in the present state, fill the soul with peace and joy. But these are faint prelibations of that future peace, which passeth understanding, and of those joys, which flow at the right hand of God. The highest joys of mortals on earth, when compared to those above, are as the dim taper of a candle to the brightness of noon. Does a benevo-

lent heart rejoice in the prosperity and felicity of its fellow mortals in this pilgrimage state? Then how will a sight of those joys of the blessed in glory, enkindle that heart into raptures of joy and transports of bliss! All the gracious and benevolent exercises of the soul in its tabernacle of clay, are only in the bud, and frequently nipt by chilling frost. But in a glorified spirit in a spiritual body, how will they flourish and bloom in endless day! Souls in glory are not only encircled in the arms of everlasting love, but they have within them a well of water, springing up unto eternal life, to produce constant joys, and render fully complete their bliss. *Amen.*

SERMON V.

REFLECTIONS ON THE DEVOTION OF THE HIGHER ORDER OF INTELLIGENCES.

Isaiah, vi. 2.

With twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

THESE words are a description of the devotion of a seraphim before the throne of God. The prophet Isaiah, in a vision, beheld the glory of God and the adoring seraphims, which surround his throne. He says, In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. This august, symbolical vision of the glory of the Lord, is described as being made at the temple. The several interposing veils were removed out of the way; and the way into the holiest was made manifest. The Lord appeared to the prophet, sitting on a throne, as in human form. It is the unanimous sense of the church, that all the divine appearances in the old Testament, were made by the Son of God, by whom all the affairs of the church were ordered from the beginning. The throne high and lifted up, seems to have been the place of the mercy-seat, over which the Lord used to appear, and where he reigned as the God of Israel and of the whole earth. And as an exteriour symbol of his majesty, his train, or the skirts of his robes, filled the whole temple. Above or against this throne, stood the seraphim, the burning one; or one of the

most glorious of the angelick orders, glowing with the holy flame of divine love. They stood, as being employed in celebrating his praises and prepared to execute his mandates. Each of them had six wings; with twain he covered his face. This is an emblem of his inability steadfastly to behold, or fully to comprehend all the glory of the Lord, and of his profound reverence and adoring awe. With twain he covered his feet. This denotes his humility, as conscious that he and his services were unworthy the notice of the Lord. And with twain he did fly. This is designed to represent his prompt celerity and alacrity, in executing the will of God. The inquiry now is, what benefit can result to us from this representation of the devotion of one of the most exalted spirits above. This subject is calculated to teach us three very important duties.

The first, That we ought to be filled with exalted and adoring views of the character of God. With twain he covered his face.

The second, That we should be filled with deep humility in view of our best performances. With twain he covered his feet.

The third, That we should be inspired with alacrity in the service of God. With twain he did fly.

I proceed to show in the first place, that we should be filled with exalted and adoring views of the character of God. The seraphim, in view of the glorious effulgence of the Deity, is represented as covering his face with two of his wings. But is it becoming the highest orders of angels to veil their faces, and to worship the great I Am, with the most profound reverence? Well then may man take his place in the dust; tremble and adore; and, with the most profound awe, contemplate the glory and perfections of God. These were the views, and this the conduct of the prophet Isaiah, in his august vision of the cherubim and of the throne of the divine Majesty. The Apostle Paul, in his extatick vision, heard things

which it is not lawful for a man to utter. How then must his soul have been overpowered with exalted and adoring views of the character of God? St. John, the revelator, on the isle of Patmos, had an overwhelming sight of the manifestations of the brightness of the glory of his God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Later saints, eminent for their lives of piety, have experienced similar views in some of their near approaches to him. The Lord is by nature invisible; and as it respects his uncreated glory, he dwelleth in light ineffable. In heaven are manifested the brightest and most perfect displays of the glory of the being and perfections of God. And glorified saints and angels, cherubims and seraphims, prostrate themselves before the throne with the highest reverence and adoration. And how are the supreme wisdom and power, the greatness and goodness of God, wonderfully displayed to the view of man in the works of creation, providence, and redemption. The immensity of the divine works is a theme calculated to fill a contemplative mind with profound astonishment and awe. Let those, who desire clearer and more enlarged views of the glorious displays of the Supreme Being, behold as in a glass the brighter glories of revelation. How wondrous are thy works, O Lord! in wisdom hast thou made them all. The heavens declare thy glory; and the firmament showeth forth thy handy work. Says the prophet, With twain he covered his face. Well then may we be filled with exalted and adoring views of the character of God.

Second. This subject is calculated to teach us, that mankind should be filled with deep humility in view of their best performances. With twain he covered his feet. All external symbols are inadequate fully to represent the majesty and excellence of the Lord. Yet they may suit our present state, in which we see through a glass darkly. All the glorified spirits above, cease not day nor night, to render unto God the glory

which is due to his name. They most perfectly fulfil the law of love, and their obedience is that of sinless perfection. But when they compare themselves and their services with the infinitely amiable and glorious character of God, they behold their comparative nothingness and unworthiness. How then must vile man appear in his sight? Says Job, Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly. How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust? Man, as a rebel against God, in an unrenewed state, is considered in a moral point of view, as wholly an unclean thing. And his righteousness is accounted as filthy rags. But let us contemplate the character of mankind as renewed by grace. Let us take a view of some, who have been considered as the faithful servants of God. The sublime vision of the divine Majesty, and the exalted worship of the seraphim, overwhelmed the prophet Isaiah with a sense of his unworthiness and vileness. Then said I, Wo is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. If glorified spirits above, think nothing of their services, what would become of him, who had presumed to speak to Jehovah, with mortal and polluted lips? The prophet, having compared himself to the seraphims, was never before filled with such humility. Hear Job's confession to the Lord: Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. The zealous apostle Paul, exclaims, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! The most holy lives of the greatest saints on earth, that have ever lived, are tarnished with deficiency and sin. They cannot compare with the spotless lives of seraphs. To witness their holy strains and fervent obedience, would be more than mortals could endure. There is not a man upon earth, who would not be

ashamed of his most admired performances, and sink into self-abhorrence, if he had a clear view of the divine glory, and of the worship of heaven. Then may we be filled with deep humility in view of our best performances.

I proceed in the third place, to show, from several considerations, why mankind should be inspired with alacrity in the service of God.

1st. They should be inspired with alacrity, because it is a great work. To work for the great King of the universe, is far the greatest undertaking, in which human beings can be engaged. The magnitude of the employment rises high, when we consider, that they, who devote themselves to the service of God, are engaged in the service of a Being, whose perfections are infinitely adorable and amiable. And, although mankind cannot be profitable to God, by their alacrity in his service, as one man may be profitable to another, yet they can do much for the honour of his name, and the promotion of his declarative glory. They who are engaged in the service of God, are not only working for him, but they are co-workers with him. They are both engaged in carrying on and promoting the same great and glorious work. Says the apostle Paul, We are labourers together with God. To be engaged in any important human labour or enterprise, demands attention and diligence. But what is the work of man for time, when compared with the work of God and for eternity? How then should mankind, not only engage perseveringly in the service of God; but they should be inspired with alacrity, because it is a great work.

2d. The consideration of the vast number of holy beings, engaged in the service of God, should serve to inspire mankind with alacrity in his service. The employments of all the principalities and powers above, are of the same nature as those of saints on earth. They are the creatures of God, are under the same law and obligations, and are seeking the

same glorious end. The only difference, is circumstantial. They never sinned as man: their place in the universe is different; and their capacities are far more enlarged. In the Psalms, we find this expression: Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening to his word. But the commands and word of God are essentially the same to all his intelligent creatures throughout the universe. If the innumerable worlds which are spread abroad throughout the immensity of God's works, are inhabited by intelligent beings; they are all under the same universal law of supreme love to God, and benevolence towards their fellow beings. Whether the capacities of some be more enlarged than any of the angelick orders; and some inferiour to those of mankind, their duties and service are essentially the same. They may be commissioned as heralds to other worlds, with messages from the Supreme King; but still the moral law of God is the rule of their obedience. Concerning the angels, the apostle Paul interrogates, Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation? This expression may serve to show the unanimity of law, government, and service throughout the moral kingdom of God. Obedience is the same, whether in concerns of apparently vast magnitude, or of small moment; whether in exalted or humble station. In the vision, of which the words of the text are a part, we behold the seraphim engaged in the same kind of worship, as that which becometh us. He revered, worshipped, and adored the great Jehovah in view of the displays of his glorious and adorable perfections. He was filled with humility, in contrasting his worship with the awful brightness and glory of God. And since a vast number of invisible, holy beings, of other worlds are engaged in the same work, let this consideration serve to inspire mankind with alacrity in the service of God.

3d. The conduct both of holy and sinning angels should serve as a motive to mankind, to engage with alacrity in the divine service. With twain he did fly. The ever watchful and vigilant seraphims are constantly ready to fly at the command of God. They execute the mandates of heaven with winged zeal and burning love. Whether they go with messages to an individual, to excite to faithfulness; or to a world, to make known the laws of God, they delight and hasten to do his will. Their kind errands to the earth, should excite its inhabitants with vigilance to prepare to be their companions in heaven. Shall holy angels be so earnest for the salvation of men? and shall they be slothful in working out their own salvation? Again: Hear the caution which the apostle Peter gives in view of the malevolent conduct of those wicked spirits, the fallen angels. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. The malicious fiends of darkness, are constantly going about, seeking the utter ruin of man. Then both from the friendly, active conduct of holy angels, and the hostile pursuits of sinning angels, let us be inspired with alacrity in the service of God.

4th. We may be excited to vigilance in the service of God, for it is a short time that is allotted us to work, as a preparation to receive our reward. The probationary state of man is diminished to a mere point, compared with his being rewarded for eternity. How short is the extent of mortal life, to lay up an eternal recompense of reward; an everlasting treasure in heaven? And would the inhabitants of earth, at last shine forth gloriously in the kingdom of God; let their lives be eminent for their vigilance in his service. How short a time for bankrupts to inherit a heavenly prize; to obtain an immortal crown! Surely it is the part of wisdom for all now to engage with vigilance in the heavenly race, and boldly maintain a good warfare. The work of conviction, re-

pentance, and a godly life, is a great work, which not only requires all our time, but our most vigilant exertions. None have time to spare; for the moment they have finished the work allotted them, and ready for their departure, they are called home. Methinks I see yon ardent spirits in glory, looking down upon us with astonishment, that the shortness of time itself does not inspire us with vigilance in the service of God, for those joys which are on high.

5th. To serve God with alacrity, is a means best calculated to promote our own happiness through the journey of life. Trials and difficulties must be encountered by all mankind, in their pilgrimage state, whether their journey be in the service of God, or in the service of satan. The future prospects of the former, are glorious: those of the latter, dreadful. Then which is preferable? The pathway of life, or the road that leads to death? The greater the alacrity in the strait and narrow way, the greater the joy: but the greater the exertions in the broad road, the greater the sorrow. The way of the one is in the light: but that of the other, in darkness. Our apostacy from God, is our wo: but our return unto him, the balm of life. To yield to the temptations of the adversary, is to increase our difficulties: but to resist them, is to renew our strength. To serve self, is to be a slave: but he that serveth Christ, is free. Then can we have any hesitancy to choose this day, whom we will serve? The way of transgressors is hard, and forbids us to walk therein. Then may we serve God with alacrity, as the means best calculated to promote our own happiness through the journey of life.

6th. To serve God with alacrity, we may do much good, and be a blessing to the world. Alacrity in the common pursuits of life, is commendable; but how much more so then, is it becoming in the service of God. To benefit mankind in their temporal concerns, is laudable; but to promote their spiritual interests, is glorious. The blessed Saviour went

about doing good, healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb. How was he the benefactor of mankind by his acts of humanity and charity! But the great end of his mission was to heal the maladies of souls, and to save mankind from remediless wo. His life is an example of perfection; and how conspicuous is it for his alacrity in doing his Father's will. Whilst he did not neglect the temporal interests of men, his zeal was exercised for their eternal welfare. And who can tell how great a blessing to the world, a faithful, zealous christian may be, by spending his days with alacrity in the service of God? Let ministers of the gospel be inspired with alacrity in the discharge of their duties; and their examples may have a goodly influence over the minds and lives of others.

To what were the successes of Cæsar owing in his wars? To his alacrity. Then let us imitate his conduct in our christian warfare. As his watchful and ready movements gave him superiour advantages over the enemies, so may our watchfulness and devotedness enable us to triumph over our spiritual enemies. Washington was distinguished for his wisdom in counsel. And we can see in several instances, that the American revolution turned on the alacrity with which his plans were executed. So may we be successful by a zeal for God, according to knowledge. The apostle Paul was a bold, intrepid, and zealous preacher of the gospel. How extensive are the blessed effects of his unwearied labours. He counted not his life dear, in comparison with serving God with alacrity. His own age, the present and future, were to reap the glorious fruits of his vigilant exertions. Little did the apostle foresee what glory to God, and good to man, would be the result of his faithfulness. Though now in glory, he must wait till the end of time to behold the wide-spread, glorious consequences of his toils. Let us take courage then, my brethren, not to be slothful, but faithful in spirit, serving

the Lord. We know not the good we may do. Let us press forward; for to be inspired with alacrity in the service of God, we may do much good for mankind, and be a blessing to the world.

IMPROVEMENT.

1st. From this subject we may see the propriety, of always acting under the influence of proper views of God. Superiour beings are thus influenced, and in all our conduct the eye of God is upon us. Our various situations in life call for praise, thanksgiving, and submission. Whether in prosperity or adversity the hand of God is to be acknowledged, for he giveth the kingdom to whomsoever he will. On the sabbath or in the pursuits of our worldly concerns, we should consider that we are accountable for all our conduct. Let us remember, how the seraphim employed his six wings. With twain he covered his face; and with twain he covered his feet; and with twain he did fly. Then from the consideration of his adoring views of God; from his humility in the view of his own performances; and his alacrity in the divine service, how should we be careful, always to act under the influence of proper views of God.

2d. From this subject we may see how foolish is the sin of pride. What has man, which he has not received? and of which he has reason to boast? Has any one great attainments, personal accomplishments, wealth, learning, or honour? And should these fill his heart with vanity, with inordinate self-esteem, and excite to insolent treatment of others? How do the highest orders of angels with all their dignity and excellence, exercise a spirit of meekness! As soon as pride entered the heart of Satan, he fell. Pharaoh, Haman, Nebuchadnezzar, and Herod were exalted above measure, with pride; and how did its towering height have a fall. The Saviour, the Lord of angels, was not a pattern of pride, but of humility. What a barrier is pride to our communion with God, and

our felicity? Pride is the contrast of humility, as meanness is to dignity. It is not only a sin, but it is foolish and vain.

3d. From this subject we may see, that to work for God, is very honourable. They who are engaged in his service, are joining hands with angels. And how frequently do those exalted, invisible spirits, come down to earth, as messengers and servants to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Does not their still whispering voice, frequently inspire believers with alacrity in the service of God? Do believers earnestly pray for the prosperity of Zion? How are hovering, attending angels solicitously waiting and watching for her interests? What a glorious work! what union of exertion with the powers above! Then the service of God is not only reasonable, but it is very honourable to be engaged in his work. *Amen.*

SERMON VI.

LITTLE THINGS BLIGHT THE FAIREST PROSPECTS OF MAN.

Solomon's Song, ii. 15.

Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.

HIGHLY figurative is the book, from which these words are taken. It contains peculiar beauties, and invites the delicate and refined mind to a close search for their discovery and excellence. Christ and the church are the general subject of discourse; and the prospects and glory of both may be considered as one. Whatever is for the honour or dishonour of the church, has a direct bearing on the person, character, and offices of Christ. And although believers are primarily intended in the wonderful theme of Solomon's Song, yet the instruction should be improved by all mankind. The words of the text will admit of a varied and highly interesting explanation. The fox is an animal, noted for his cunning, craft, and mischievous tricks. Foxes used to injure the vines by trampling on them, and they destroyed the grapes of the vintage. And little foxes would spoil the vines, which were loaded with clusters of tender grapes. Hence not only the old and cunning fox, but little foxes must be taken and secured, lest they destroy the labours of man. Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes. This figurative expression teaches this simple truth, That little sins, little failings, and little things do sometimes blight the fairest prospects of human happiness, and destroy the fondest hopes and dearest privileges of man. The subject will apply

to rational, social, civil, and religious duties and prospects.

1st. The mind may be considered as a vine, capable of bringing forth tender grapes; but if little foxes are suffered to make it their den, and to run at large, they will spoil the vine, and destroy the tender and precious fruit. If, instead of cherishing and cultivating virtuous principles and social affections, we suffer evil passions to predominate but in a small degree, how is inward peace destroyed. Then in vain may we look for fruit ripe and delicious, whilst nettles and thorns overspread the ground. Our minds, by proper culture, will yield the fruits of peace, encouragement, and animation; but if they are neglected, there will spring up the sad crops of uneasiness, discouragement, and dejection. It is for the want of a little reflection and consideration, that a fretful and restless disposition takes the place of a peaceable and quiet mind. If we guard the vine, shooting buds, pleasant flowers and fruit, which is sweet to the taste, will be produced in rich abundance. The pains or labour which we bestow in taking the little foxes, and preventing their pernicious tricks, will be amply repaid by a rich and glorious harvest. Then let anger and jealousy, hatred and envy, malice and revenge, be checked in their first risings; before they are fanned into a flame, intolerable to the soul. The happiness of every person depends very much on the proper government of himself, and the forming of such habits of reflection as tend to alleviate the common distresses of life. Some dispositions are naturally more generous, humane, and contented than others; but those, which are most unfavourable, by seasonable attention and proper management, may be rendered very agreeable. It is important to consider our acquaintances in a favourable point of view, and to reflect much on the varied blessings daily confered upon us. And whilst we would guard against grossly sinful and

pernicious thoughts, let our meditations be such as our own consciences and our God will approve. May we keep our hearts with all diligence, that our minds may be fruitful vines, bringing forth the choicest grapes in the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

2d. Society may be considered as a wide spreading vine, whose rich clusters are liable to be destroyed by little foxes, unless they be taken and secured. So varied are the natural dispositions and pursuits of mankind, that mutual forbearance is essential to the peace and prosperity of community. Offences do not only arise from flagrant acts of injustice; but trivial faults or failings do sometimes occasion serious difficulties. Sometimes a trifling misunderstanding is the means of wide spread and lasting evils. Little things do now and then cause divisions amongst young people, and draw forth foolish and hard sayings. Small faults or failings are suffered to interrupt their union, to break their peace, and mar all their enjoyments. Perhaps some one has made a michievous observation, and others for want of wisdom give it aggravated colourings, and let it rancour their breasts. Even imaginary evils do break the repose of some, and fill their hearts with disquietude. But it is truly pitiable, that youth should suffer such little foxes to blight their fairest prospects of present enjoyment, and beset their ways with unnecessary perplexities. A little discretion and reflection might prevent the mischiefs; and a little sympathy and benevolence would soothe the minds, and heal those differences, which may exist in the social circles of the young.

But shall trivial misdemeanours interrupt the harmony and make of no avail the social privileges of persons of age and experience? Shall the slightest provocations separate friends, cause bitter animosities, and sharp contentions to arise? Shall the spreading vine of society, its varied branches, and numerous clusters, be suffered to be overrun and de-

stroyed by little foxes? Rather let them be taken, when young, and their mischiefs prevented. Let not the middle aged suffer mere trifles to wound their own souls, and to give poignant anguish to others for the want of a little wisdom and faithfulness. Did a worm at the root of Jonah's gourd wither and blight its fairest prospects? How affecting and melancholy, if in like manner little foxes run at large, and consume the tender grapes, and spoil the various branches of the vine of society. Caution, in words and actions, is necessary; but especially heed should be taken in relating unpleasant reports, would we behold the vine green and flourishing. A charitable spirit and words fitly spoken, administer sap and life to its withered and decaying branches. How varied and endearing the goodly prospects of social circles and civil life. Then may our actions say, Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes, which must flourish, and come to maturity.

3d. Parents may be considered as a vine; and their offspring, its branches. Hence their mutual prospects may be represented by clusters of tender and choice grapes. But the ties of parental and filial affection are so interwoven into their very natures, we should hardly imagine, that small failings could be the means of very serious and lasting evils. Yet thousands of parents have seen their children brought to disgrace and ruin, and have accused themselves as being the authors, by their little indulgencies in those things and ways which their consciences could not call right. Some, who have not been taught obedience at an early age, have, in their youth, proved the shame and painful mortification of their parents by their disobedience and unblushing impudence. On the other hand, some parents, instead of governing their children, do only provoke them to wrath. Instead of making an unruly temper yield, they do but excite the most violent anger, and in-

crease a malignant stubbornness. Would they only use a little faithfulness and firmness, their offspring would be trained up in the way they should go. Are children the delight of their parents? Oh, that they would love them enough to seek their present and future well-being. They should not suffer the little foxes to spoil the vine, nor its branches, nor the clusters of tender and choice grapes.

4th. The relation of husband and wife, may be considered as a vine, abounding with tender grapes, whose fair prospects the little foxes should not be suffered to blight. What natural tie is so endearing, what union and felicity on earth are so important, and so desirable to be promoted. And how unreasonable and lamentable, that little things should be the means of putting these asunder? If conjugal affection and charity will not exercise forbearance, what in this world will? Notwithstanding mere trifles, the slightest neglects do sometimes cause coldness, reproaches, and violent contentions. There are some whose hearts are knit together in love, and yet they are frequently at variance; simply because they will not learn to bear each other's burdens. If due allowance would only be made for those imperfections which are common to human nature, the most of the difficulties of conjugal life would be prevented. In general, the reason why some families are far more agreeable and happy than others, is not that they have so much better natural dispositions; but because the united head have so much better faculty of taking the little foxes, or the talent of bearing with little things. But if the little foxes be not taken, disputes, private and publick, may ensue, a continued storm arise, and at last even separation take place, though not at first in the least expected.

5th. It is probable, that the church in general, and believers in particular, were more immediately designed to be represented by the words of the text. The church may be considered as the vine; and the

tender grapes may refer to young believers, as Christ himself applies to them the epithet, little ones. Hence says the royal preacher, Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes. This is evidently a caution against every thing, however plausible, which tends to hinder the prosperity of the church, and the fruitfulness of believers. That this vine should flourish, and abound with tender clusters more precious than the grapes of Eshcol, the Saviour observed to his followers, Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. Not only is open, gross immorality in the professors of religion a burden to the vine, but also any pursuit, indulgence, or way, which is inconsistent with vital piety and practical godliness. Whatever may be considered as a waste of our precious time, or whatever engrosses too much of our attention, and tends to the neglect of the means of grace, are of such a nature. Though a certain pursuit be not directly criminal in itself, yet by excessive indulgence it has a tendency to spoil the vine, and mar its tender grapes, like the unsuspected subtlety of the fox. The first risings of sinful thoughts and desires in believers, and the beginning of trifling pursuits, are like the little foxes, which, if not taken seasonably, will spoil the vines. Vain or trifling visits, which waste much time, incur great expense, and put the mind out of a proper frame for devotion, are peculiarly injurious in this respect. Those employments or recreations, that intrude on the hours that should be employed in serious meditation, self-examination, searching the scriptures, and secret prayer, are not only vanity, but chilling frosts to the soul, and mildews, whose acrimony corrodes the most flourishing vines. Even lawful and needful pursuits and recreations, when attended with excess or inexpediency, choke the word and it becometh unfruitful. They who have experienced the blessed change of conversion, ought to obey the call of Christ to arise and

follow him, and to leave the world and sin behind, that they may enjoy much of his love. Thus the fruits of holiness would appear, and the vine be revived. Believers should desire to bring forth plenteously the fruits of righteousness. And those christians who have been careful observers, perceive that the little, despised foxes do much harm to the branches of the living vine. Plausible errours, trivial omissions, compliances, and indulgencies, may be more general hindrances to christian progression and usefulness, than the most distressing temptations. Satan or his emissaries, may do more harm as subtle, unsuspected deceivers, than as furious persecutors. Therefore a watch should be maintained against the very beginning and appearance of evil; and the little foxes should be destroyed, before they become capable of important and extensive mischief. Whether young believers, or the dearest privileges and rich blessings of the gospel, be intended by the term, tender grapes, the example of old professors should not only be free from severe censure and an astonishment to them, but it should be such as to emulate them to good works. And let young professors realize that many eyes are watching them for little sins; and even their imperfections, short-comings, deficiencies, and mis-steps, for want of experience, are considered in them by some, as mountains. The followers of Christ must not only be moral, or shun immorality, but they should manifest the spirit, and endeavour to exhibit the life of Christ, that they may be a light to the world. They should watch with all diligence, against whatever may injure the vine; and should cherish the tender grapes, that they come to maturity and perfection. For this end, the blessing of heaven must be implored with importunity, for those reviving and fruitful showers, which will water the vine, cause it to be green and fair, its branches to spread, and its leaves to be a pleasant shade for abundance of rich clusters of the choicest grapes.

IMPROVEMENT.

1st. If little sins, little failings, and little things do sometimes blight the fairest prospect of human happiness, and destroy the fondest hopes of man, and his dearest privileges, then we may see that great effects may result from small or minute causes: or that momentous consequences proceed from little or trivial beginnings. This truth may be illustrated in both a natural and moral point of view. In both the natural and moral world we frequently behold great and important events, connected and dependent on those, that are very minute. Hence we hear the exclamation, Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth. A spark of fire is a little thing; it is extinguished by a drop of water; or, if not enkindled by fuel, dies of itself. Yet we know, that a spark of fire often becomes the instrument of extensive utility or mischief. A spark of fire is communicated to a magazine of powder. In a moment, massy walls of wood and stone, the pride of war, and the labour of years, yield to the dreadful explosion, and scattered in ten thousand fragments, spread terrour and destruction around. A spark of fire is concealed in a closet, or on the roof of a building. Shortly a family start from their slumbers, and see their dwelling with all its contents in a blaze. The flames kindle upon the adjacent buildings; the neighbourhood is involved in the spreading ruin; and, perhaps, a city is laid in ashes. Sparks of fire from the flint or match occasion blood and carnage, and spread the field of battle with the dead. Vast is the extent of the kingdom of providence; and the connection of minute with great events, is a subject not merely of curiosity, but one with which our duty and happiness are deeply concerned. A very limited acquaintance with the connexion of causes and effects, must convince us, that, in the natural and moral government of God, great things do often depend on small. A moment is scarcely noticed, but centuries are made

up of moments. The mountain, that rears its stately head to the clouds, is composed of grains of sand. The river, that rolls its majestick tide to the ocean, consists of drops. On its waters, navies float; but followed to its source, it becomes a rivulet, and even a spring, bubbling from a rock of some mountain. Thus the greatest events, which the world has ever witnessed, have resulted from a combination of concurrent causes, each of which might seem unimportant in itself. The tongue is a little member; yet, on the one hand, it is the spring of social life, the great cement of society; and, on the other hand, it is a world of iniquity, and setteth on fire the course of nature. That little member speaks a word. What then? Alienation of friends, coldness, then jealousy and enmity ensue. And if they are persons of eminence, other tongues will cause some trivial misunderstanding to rise into consequences of incalculable importance. The same connexion, betwixt small things and great, runs through all the concerns of our world. The incorrectness of an instructer may cause many to have an incorrect and deficient education. The ignorance of an apothecary or physician may send sickness and death into a family, and spread it through a town. And how often has a pestilential disease from one man, spread its infection to thousands of others. Our first parents sinned; and how have sin and death polluted and swept off their descendants from the earth in consequence of their transgression. A spark of envy in the bosom of Joseph's brethren, grew into settled enmity, and lead them to aim at the destruction of his life. Here commenced a series of events, which became so vast and so extended, as to give complexion to the affairs of two nations through all subsequent periods. Who can read the history of Joseph, and not have his mind deeply impressed with a sense of the connexion of great events with minute causes. What important events resulted from the decree of

Pharaoh to destroy every Hebrew male child. To avoid the execution of this decree, a Hebrew mother resolved to commit her babe to the mercy of providence, with no other protection from the elements and monsters of the Nile, than an ark of bulrushes. A stranger passed that way, the very moment the child wept. That stranger was a woman whose heart could feel for a poor, forsaken infant: a princess, the only person in Egypt, who might safely indulge this tenderness. She saved the child and adopted him as her son. How compassionate, how amiable, and noble her conduct. But little did that princess know what she was doing. Little did she think, that that weeping infant thus singularly rescued from death, was to be the minister of divine vengeance to her haughty father and his kingdom. Little did she imagine, that the Red Sea would divide at his presence, that he was to write five books of the sacred scriptures, containing the only authentick account of the creation; and be a deliverer, legislator, and guide to the church of God. It will appear as clear as noon-day, that great effects result from minute causes, if we take a view of the giant, Goliah, and the shepherd, David. How did the champion defy the armies of Israel, and strike terrour and dismay into the hearts of the men of war, and the chief captains. At length the stripling shepherd, with faith in the Lord of hosts, using no weapons but a sling and a stone, laid prostrate before the two armies the mighty giant. Thus a common stone, useless and unnoticed perhaps for ages in the bottom of a brook, slew the champion, routed the army of the Philistines, and decided a mighty battle, on which the great interests of a nation were suspended. The beautiful and majestick temple of Jerusalem was built by the labour and wealth of a nation. Yet a single fire-brand, thrown by a common soldier of the Roman army, consumed this magnificent edifice, which had been the glory of the Jews, and the wonder of the world. How have a few licentious men

in Europe, corrupt in their political and religious principles, by their conduct and writings, diffused a spirit of anarchy and licentiousness amongst thousands. In several places the fire which they enkindled, has burst forth into a tremendous conflagration. Like Ætna's boiling furnaces, it has poured forth rivers of flame to mar all that was fair, and to consume all that was flourishing. On the other hand, who can estimate the vast benefit, resulting to mankind from the lives and writings of men, eminently wise, active, and faithful. The happy consequences will descend to posterity, and to the end of the world. Of the thousands, which might be noticed, let only one be named, and one part of his labours. Doctor Thomas Scott, in his life, wrote an exposition of the holy scriptures. How have thousands of divines, and tens of thousands of the lovers of truth, already been profited by his writings. And probably millions, yet unborn, will rise up and call him blessed. He needs no monument erected over his grave and mouldering dust. His memory will be wide spread, and perpetuated by individuals and nations for ever, and his monument reach the heavens. Connected as we are with our fellow-men, our conduct though apparently small or indifferent, is of vast importance. Hence we should be ever ready and encouraged to assist every laudable undertaking. Well may youth pursue useful studies with alacrity, that they may become eminently useful members of society. That knowledge which they acquire may be diffused to thousands of others. Well may instructers of youth be encouraged and rejoice, when they look forward, and consider the extensive and happy consequences, which will be the result of their labours, and of the useful knowledge, which they shall have communicated. Well may ministers of the gospel be zealously engaged to bring forth from the sacred volume, things both new and old, and patiently wait the result of their unwearied exertions, till they shall be revealed, in the last great day. *Amen.*

SERMON VII.

MAN ADMONISHED OF HIS DUTY, BY INFERIOUR CREATURES.

Proverbs, vi. 6.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.

MANKIND were not made for inactivity and sloth; but for activity and diligence. Still we find they need many excitements to action and industry, in order to prevent a state of indolence, and a course of prodigality. Both from observation and the word of God, we are taught that much of the precious time which is entrusted to mortals, runs to waste. Solomon, the wisest of men, beheld this, and his heart was deeply affected with the melancholy truth. He saw that many not only neglected a prudent management of their temporal concerns, but that they were also unwilling to seize the most favourable opportunity for attending to those which are eternal. He beheld the sons of men negligent and averse to spiritual duties, and eternal concerns. And as those things which have a particular reference to eternity, are of vastly greater importance, than those which may be said to end with time, he saw that folly and madness were in the heart of every one, who was not laying up a treasure for another and better state of existence. The words of the text, in a figurative manner, show the vast importance of having something laid up in store for the soul, when it forsakes its tenement of clay, to dwell in a world invisible, and to mortals unknown. And as the wise man saw that time is the only day of grace, the only space for repentance and state of preparation for eternity, he

was grieved to the heart to behold his fellow mortals, loitering in sluggishness, and squandering away this precious, this invaluable season. They would not listen, they would not consider, they would not take heed to their ways, by redeeming their time, notwithstanding he gave salutary counsel and good instruction. But Solomon seemed to hope, that, although many would not listen to his friendly admonitions, they would be led to consider their ways and be wise, if he should turn their attention to the preaching of the beasts of the field, or to creatures which have not intelligence, as man. He directs them to go to the ant, an insect industrious and wise, to consider her ways and learn a lesson of wisdom. This little insect, by her worthy example, would teach them that they ought to be greatly engaged, in preparing for their future well-being. To illustrate this subject, I shall in the

First place, Show what men need for a future day.

Secondly, Show how they may lay up a store to supply their future wants.

Thirdly, Offer some reasons to show, that they ought now to be greatly engaged, in preparing for their future well-being.

First. *I am to show what men need for a future day.*

1st. I would observe, they need a store of spiritual food, upon which the soul may feed after death. Animal nature must be refreshed with animal or material food. But the soul is a spirit; and when it leaves its animal frame, or earthly tabernacle, to dwell in a world of spirits, it cannot be satisfied with that food, which is designed for the body. The very nature and condition of an unbodied spirit, prevent it from being made happy by sensual enjoyments. An intelligent mind must centre in God as the fountain and source of all good, in order to the perfection and blessedness of its existence. A departure from him fills the soul with an aching void, and nothing but a return can make up the deficiency, or restore true

and lasting enjoyment. We have reason to conclude, that the Lord could not make a disobedient and unbodied spirit happy, unless he should perform a constant series of miracles in order to produce the effect. In the invisible state, there are none of the objects of time and sense to engage the attention, and gratify the mind. From what source then can it find delight, unless in the immediate enjoyment of that Being, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift? Were a finite spirit permitted to wander through the utmost bounds of the invisible state, it must be miserable indeed, unless it have the approbation and smiles of God. To be happy in the invisible and future state, mankind must have the bread of life, upon which their souls may feed; and that drink, which is eternal life. The provisions of this life will not avail in the life to come. In this view is the command of the Saviour, Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Hence we may see, that mankind need a store of spiritual food to be laid up, upon which their souls may feed after death.

2d. They need an atoning Saviour, and an advocate with the Father at the court of heaven. The treasure which they have been laying up, is for a place very different from that of heaven. They have been treasuring up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath. Many have been very active in preparing their souls for an awful inheritance. As a miser, who hoards up gold in treasure; or as the clouds treasure up rain to be poured forth upon the earth, so have they been laying up in store a treasure of iniquity against the revelation of the righteous judgement of God. And to such, without the presenting of the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, a holy and just God is a consuming fire. How will guilty creatures appear in the immediate presence of their righteous and final Judge, unless they have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous? When the sinner's crimes shall appear, ven-

geance will call for his blood, except the great Saviour present his own blood as the ground of pardon and acceptance. Unless his sins be cast into the depths of the sea as it were, in consequence of the Saviour's sufferings and death, they will appear in judgement for his condemnation. Nor can rebels of Adam's race appear without consternation in the invisible state of retribution, except the great and glorious Mediator between God and man, make intercession for them in the solemn presence of their offended Sovereign. They will not be able to stand before the Son of man, unless Immanuel plead their cause, and acknowledge them before his holy angels and an assembled universe as his redeemed ones from among men. Hence, then, mankind for a future day, need an atoning Saviour; and an advocate with the Father at the great court of heaven.

Having made some observations to show what men need for a future day, I proceed to notice in the second place, *how they may lay up a store to supply their future wants.* And will not all be anxious to know how they may make such rich provision, and attain this great and desirable end? Will not every one be ready to comply with almost any condition? or unremittingly pursue the hardest labours, and encounter the greatest difficulties, even through the whole of their lives? The gain would be unspeakably great to any who would thus engage? But the pearl of great price, a store of never fading treasures, may be obtained, even by rebels against the King of the universe, by doing the most reasonable things in the world. The terms are the lowest, the most favourable and suitable, that can possibly be made. And I would observe the first thing to be done, by those who would make preparation for a future day, is to repent of their sins. Their immediate duty is to look into their wicked and rebellious hearts, and exercise repentance, to loathe and abhor themselves for their transgressions. It is morally fit and suitable for all

who have departed from God, by walking in the paths of disobedience, to exercise true, evangelical repentance on the account of the malignity of their actions, and thus begin to walk in newness of life. And surely the great and infinitely blessed Jehovah could not possibly receive his guilty creatures into his favour, to treat them as his friends, on any other ground, consistently with the honour of his name, and the glory of his kingdom. If the Lord should raise a heart of enmity, a spirit of rebellion against him to a mansion of glory, while in impenitence, he would virtually declare to the universe, that his requirements had been unreasonable and cruel, and that the sinner must be justified to the reproach of his Maker. Nor could a sinner find soul-satisfying enjoyment, even in the abodes of the blessed, if his heart of impenitence should follow him there. How reasonable and suitable then, for those who would lay up a store to supply their future wants, immediately to exercise that repentance which the gospel requires, and which is unto life eternal.

2d. Saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the reasonable duty of every one, and what entitles to salvation. Since Christ has died, the just for the unjust, to make a sacrifice for sin, how reasonable for all to love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and embrace him as their God and Saviour. And it is unreasonable for any to demand of the Father, that he would pardon and save them, while they continue to reject his Son, by refusing to exercise that faith, which worketh by love, and purifieth the heart. God the Father would tarnish his own glory, if he should save one gospel sinner, who refuses to have the Saviour reign over him; for, by so doing, he would announce to the universe, that the race of Adam might as well have been saved without the death of his Son. It is necessary for the honour of the divine law, and for the righteousness and consistency of the divine conduct, that gospel sinners believe on the Lord Jesus

Christ, or be damned. Infinite was the condescension of Jehovah, in devising the great and glorious scheme of man's redemption through Jesus Christ, and the great term of salvation, even faith in his name, is the lowest or most reasonable, that can possibly be made. Mankind must cheerfully comply with this, or else they must pray God to let them go on in the devices of their depraved hearts, and in the sight of their own eyes, without seeing any form or comeliness in the Saviour, that they should desire him.

3d. Perseverance in well doing, will secure a heavenly and never failing treasure. Through grace, in consequence of the atonement which Christ has made, mankind may receive an everlasting reward for all those works, which imply true obedience. Then why stand ye here all the day idle? To those of the sixth, ninth, or eleventh hour, says the divine Redeemer, Go, work in my vineyard. To him, that endureth to the end, eternal life is the reward, for they received every man a penny. The obedience of the heart, and perseverance in well doing, will gain an immortal prize. Thus we may see how mankind may lay up a treasure of durable riches, and have something substantial in store to supply their future wants.

I now proceed in the third place, to offer some reason to show, *that they ought now to be greatly engaged, in preparing for their future well-being.*

1st. God, their heavenly Father, commands them immediately to engage in the work. When the Lord speaks, his intelligent creatures are bound to hear and obey. An earthly parent considers his child to be under obligations to yield obedience to his wise and reasonable requirements; but how much greater the obligations of men to yield entire and cheerful obedience to the righteous commands of the great, the infinite Parent. Shall any think to excuse themselves from their moral obligations of obedience

even of immediate compliance, by pleading, that they have lived in disobedience for many years, and have no disposition to obey? Would a disobedient child be excused, for not returning to his father's house, and rendering filial obedience to his parent's commands, if he should observe, that he had voluntarily strayed from his Father's house, and openly trampled upon his authority? Or, shall mankind be free from guilt and blame, if they plead the secret enmity of their hearts against God, and their averseness to all his reasonable requirements to be so great, that they cannot love and serve him? How many times, and in how light a manner, are such heaven-daring excuses made by a God-provoking world! Perhaps some one is ready to say, I am greatly affected and alarmed at the awful wickedness and stubbornness of my heart, lest it finally sink me in perdition; hence my plea is made with great seriousness. Yes! and let me ask, What would you think of a child, who, in a very serious and solemn manner, even in the sincerity of his heart, should declare to his Father, that he hated him with perfect and fixed hatred; and that he could not be persuaded to love and obey him, even by the most solicitous and endearing entreaties and persuasions? When you seriously and candidly decide this point, then judge how vain and wicked are all those excuses, which are made by mankind, for not turning to the Lord, and cheerfully engaging in his service with all the powers of their souls, since he commands them immediately to engage in the all important work of preparing for their future well-being.

2d. The patience and forbearance of God, is another reason why they should not delay to engage in the work. It is an affecting consideration, that they who defer laying up a treasure for a future day, despise the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering. The Lord grants sinners space for repentance, and lengthens out their for-

feited lives, that they may turn unto him and live. But they who abuse his supporting and governing agency, by continuing their impenitence and hardness of heart, do weary his patience, and provoke his awful vengeance. And are there not some, who have long abused the long-suffering of God, and who have often tempted him to show his wrath, and make his power known? The miser, after many years of covetous success; and the clouds, just before a storm, do greatly increase in their treasure. So they, who have long abused the glorious compassion, and marvellous long-suffering of God, are making hasty strides in the road to ruin; and their treasure is fast increasing and rapidly redoubling to be repaid in sorrow. But is there nothing neither in the character nor conduct of the ever blessed God, which will lead men to take heed to their ways, and to lay up in store a goodly and never fading treasure? If his justice will not excite them, must it be that they will not be moved neither by his grace, nor his mercy, nor his forbearance and patience towards them? Have redeeming grace and dying love no attractions in the view of the sons of men? Must the pleas and intercessions of yon glorious and exalted Saviour, be set at nought and spurned? Shall it be that they, as barren fig-trees, will bring forth no fruit unto God? Mankind not only act unwisely, by refusing to engage in the great and all important work of laying up in store a treasure upon which their souls may feed after death, but they do very wickedly, by abusing the divine patience and forbearance.

3d. Mankind ought to be immediately and greatly engaged in this work; for it is that, in which they are most highly interested. They, who engage in this work, have eternal life begun in the soul; and a few years perseverance at most, will put them in full possession of a glorious and an eternal inheritance. Short, indeed, the term for laying up a treasure; but great and glorious the reward. How do men labour

and fatigue themselves, and seize every favourable opportunity to lay up a treasure upon earth, which must shortly fail them! But wisdom crieth aloud, she uttereth her voice in the streets; and, in view of a heavenly treasure, she says to every one, Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. The compassionate Redeemer, who well knew what is the true interest and wisdom of men, says, Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which shall endure unto eternal life. They, who shall so run as to obtain, will be put in possession of an unspeakable prize; but they who loiter by the way and refuse to work, will meet with a loss which will be matter of unspeakable regret and endless lamentation. Then let men be immediately and greatly engaged, in working out their own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is a business of their highest concern.

4th. Men ought immediately to engage in laying up a heavenly treasure, for they have but one short space in which to perform this work. This present state, is the only day of grace; the only seed-time for mortals to prepare for a great and glorious harvest. And doubtless, with many the day is far spent, and the night is at hand. Doubtless, with many to-morrow will be for ever too late, to lay in store a good treasure, by sowing to the spirit, that they may reap everlasting life. And how melancholy, how deplorable indeed the state of those who in vain lament, The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. But will men still turn a deaf ear to all the calls of God? When the thunders of Sinai roar around them, will they not be moved? Are they so stupid and sluggish as not to be aroused notwithstanding all that the Lord has said and done? Solomon exhorts those who will not hear the voice of God, nor of his servants, calling upon them to go to the ant, one of the little and prudent creatures which God has made, to observe her ways; and, by awaking from their stupidity, to learn a lesson of wisdom. Go to the ant,

thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise: Which, having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard! when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come, as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man. Of how much greater consequence is the soul-important work, in which men are called to engage, than that of the ants, whose only concern is to provide for the winter! And doubtless the time of many will be much shorter to lay up a treasure for heaven, than that of the ants to prepare for their future day. But shall it be, that the ants, guided by instinct, lay in a store in due season, and give all diligence to have a supply for their future wants, while men, who have intelligent powers, loiter and slumber, when eternal concerns press upon them? Let men observe the propriety and wisdom of the insects of the earth, and be admonished from their ways to learn a lesson of heavenly wisdom, lest in the book of divine providence, at the last great day, they appear in judgement against them.

IMPROVEMENT.

1st. *Are men admonished not only by the word of God, but by the ants, to be laying up a treasure in heaven?* Then it cannot be owing to the want of knowledge, that they neglect this work. In the word of God, the pathway of life is clearly pointed out; and all nature urges men not to delay the work of preparing for the future. The beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and insects of the earth, reprove men of their unmindfulness and ingratitude towards their Creator and most bountiful Benefactor. How active are the various tribes of irrational creatures, in showing forth the praises of their Maker! Their language to the sons of men is, O come join with us: in an intelligent, and

more noble way, declare his praise. But hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against me. My hearers, look to your domestick animals. Are they as unmindful of you, as you are of your God? Do they treat you with the neglect with which you treat your heavenly Parent? But remember this truth, To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

2d. *Then the only reason why men neglect the duties of religion, and concerns of their souls, must be their extreme and criminal aversion to them.* Surely the motives are sufficiently great to excite the most sluggish into activity and diligence, unless they have unfeeling, obdurate hearts. If any plead their blindness, they virtually plead guilty; for the voluntary opposition of the heart to the light and duties of the gospel, induces men to stop their ears, shut their eyes, and blind their minds. But who for this is to be blamed? Sinners, in gospel lands, see and confess that the great concerns of religion and their souls, are of unspeakably greater importance than any or all of the pursuits and enjoyments of this present world. But if they confess these things, what makes them sleep in awful security, when the torments of hell should alarm, and the joys of heaven allure the most stupid sinner. This kind of blindness discovers great wickedness; for it discovers a willingness to treat the ever blessed God with continued contempt, and to be the murderers of their own souls, when they are convinced they ought to take heed. The ants assist each other in laying up a store for the future; but how unwilling are men to do any thing for their own salvation or that of others. They mutually agree to lay up treasures upon earth; yet how do they fold their hands together and say, Yet a little sleep, a little slumber; when the thought of encouraging each other to walk in the straight and narrow way, comes to

their view. Then mankind are not only to be pitied but blamed, for their moral stupidity and blindness.

3d. From this subject we see, *that as natural sloth tends to poverty, so spiritual sloth proves ruinous to the soul.* If impenitent sinners were truly awake, and not in a state of despair, they would be much excited to do something in order to escape the wrath to come. Perhaps some are ready to wonder why the Lord does not give them a new heart, and pardon their sins; because he appears in behalf of others, and shows mercy. But were they not criminally stupid and blind, they would wonder why a holy and just God has so long spared their forfeited lives, and not cut them off in their sins as cumberers of his ground. How many thousands have acted the part of the sluggard, sleeping in their sins, till they have opened their eyes in torment. And is it not now as dangerous to say, Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep? Says Solomon to every one of this description, Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise.

4th. Let all take the alarm, and awake to righteousness, lest the wrath of God come upon them to the utmost. Let saints arise and trim their lamps. They should ever be greatly engaged in laying up a treasure in heaven, that they may reap a rich harvest, a great and glorious reward. Their redemption is now nearer, than when they first believed; hence, they should give all diligence to make their calling and election sure. The present, especially calls for extraordinary exertions and zeal in the cause of the Redeemer. The Lord Jesus is doing great and wonderful things for Zion. In a very special manner is he blessing the exertions of his people, and enlarging the borders of his glorious kingdom. And is this a time for his people to sleep? Let them awake, be up and doing, and not tarry to make excuses, but prepare to meet the bridegroom. Let impenitent sinners awake, and speedily flee to the mountain of

safety. Have they not folded their hands together long enough, crying, Yet a little sleep, a little slumber. It is now almost impossible to awake some, and will they yet sleep? Are they determined not to awake, till the light of eternity opens their eyes? Yonder, methinks I see the Saviour with very solemn but cheerful looks. What heart-felt expression flows from his lips? Rise, sinner; he calleth thee. Come, O come to Jesus. The Spirit and the Bride say, come. Let him that heareth, say come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. If any will yet sleep, it must be to their own cost. But awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life. Awake to righteousness; lay up for yourself a treasure in heaven, that your soul may live, and for ever feast and rejoice with that innumerable company at the great marriage supper of the Lamb. *Amen.*

SERMON VIII.

HUMAN ACTIVITY A MEANS, OF OBTAINING BLESSINGS FROM GOD.

Mark iii. 5.

Stretch forth thine hand.

ALL the ways of God are perfect and right, whether man be reconciled to them or not. He is the Lord and Sovereign of the universe, and all his intelligent creatures are bound to render implicit obedience to all his commands; for no one of them is unreasonable. All the general laws and positive precepts of the supreme Ruler are such as are worthy a Being supremely wise and good. Notwithstanding there is a controversy between the supreme, moral Governour, and his rebellious subjects on the earth, his foot-stool. Their language is, His ways are hard and grievous; not suited to the state and condition of weak and erring mortals. But says the Lord, Come now and let us reason together. Are not my ways equal? and are not your ways unequal? In infinite compassion he condescends to reason with men, even the rebellious, who find fault with his ways, and call him a hard master. The words of the text with those in connexion, are an interesting narrative, and serve to show the depravity of the human heart, and the benevolence of God towards man. Jesus entered into the synagogue; and there was a man there, which had a withered hand. And the Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day; that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man, which had the withered hand, stand forth. And he said unto them, is it lawful to

do good on the Sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. By this miraculous restoration at the exertion of the man we are taught, that human activity is a means of obtaining blessings from God. The subject will be illustrated with considerable variety.

1st. *The conduct of mankind in natural life, may serve to illustrate and evince the necessity of human activity, in order to obtain what are denominated natural blessings.* The comforts and conveniences of life are not obtained by idleness and sloth; but by industry and activity. The earth would not yield her increase in such rich profusion, were it not cultivated by the hand of man. There must be ploughing and sowing, harvesting and ingathering, that the wants of her numerous inhabitants may be supplied. Not only activity, but times and seasons are to be observed, for committing seeds to the earth, and for gathering her precious fruits. Hence the husbandman at a suitable time casts forth seed, and then patiently waits for the early and latter rain, and in due season reaps a rich harvest, as a reward of his labours. The earth is a vast and inexhaustible store-house, from which, by proper means and exertions, the whole human family may derive the necessities and comforts of life. But without human activity only a small portion of the globe could subsist. Even in paradise Adam was to till the ground; and since the fall, human labour is necessarily increased. After the flood the promise was made, While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease. But this does by no means imply, that should mankind fold their hands together as the sluggard and call for a little more sleep, that the earth would

spontaneously abound with all her productions, and lavish on man her choicest goods. It is designed as an encouragement for human exertion. And, in similar circumstances, where a people are the most industrious and economical, there the good things of this life are enjoyed in the greatest profusion. All nature teems with life and activity; and to the slothful, her voice of admonition is, Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. As it is true, that without the blessing of God, in giving fruitful showers and the genial influence of the sun, the labours of man would be vain, so is it equally true, that in the constitution of natural things, we may be led to see the necessity of human activity, in order to obtain what are denominated natural blessings.

2d. *Individual prosperity in earthly good things, is connected with human activity.* It is true that wealth or riches are distributed by the hand of Providence, whether mankind are born to affluence, or whether they acquire wealth by the means of their labours. It is also a matter of fact, that the industrious do not always become wealthy, nor that riches are always to men of understanding. But, still we often see this truth verified, That idleness will clothe a man with rags; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. Property is generally acquired by the use of means; either by bodily or mental exertions, and frequently by both. Some by persevering labour and an enterprising spirit, not only obtain a competence, but accumulate great riches. The person in want is convinced, that human activity is the proper means to relieve his necessities. Such may trust in Providence; but this is only by looking to God for a blessing on their labours or honest exertions. And we may frequently see from the conduct of such, that necessity is the mother of invention. The worthy poor man does not give himself up to idleness; but he gives diligence, by some honest calling, to obtain food and

raiment, and the varied comforts of life. Whether any one be more or less successful in the lawful pursuits of secular concerns, he must depend on the blessing of God to crown his endeavours with success. Still this dependance is not a discouragement to exertion; but a ground or reason to excite to action. Not only the word of God, but also the conduct of mankind serves to show, that human activity is a means for individuals to obtain earthly good things.

3d. *In time of sickness or of some natural calamity, human activity and means, are necessary in order to obtain a blessing from God.* Although it is true, that it is appointed unto man once to die, and that his days are numbered with the Almighty as the days of an hireling, that he cannot pass; yet it is equally true, that where life is prolonged, means are included. In times of sickness of an alarming nature, how quickly is the physician called, and how carefully his prescriptions observed. In some cases without his assistance, life would not be endangered; but, in ten thousand instances, without his speedy aid, death would inevitably ensue; whereas, through his instrumentallity, the years of many are multiplied. Still it is the blessing of God, which alone can give efficacy to medical aid, to raise from the borders of the grave, and restore to health. How are the most skilful exertions baffled, unless he give efficacy. But, notwithstanding the keys of life and of death, are in the hands of God; yet how readily do mankind make use of human exertions and means, in order to preserve life and promote health. And whether the Lord grant blessings by a natural or miraculous cause, he has instituted means to be used, and demands human activity. Sometimes, however, men despise the directions from heaven, and would prescribe the means to be used for their own selves, as if they were wiser than their Maker. The story of Naaman, captain of the Assyrian host, and who was a leper,

may be happily brought to view in this place. By a little Hebrew maid, he hears of a prophet in Israel. With a letter from the king of Assyria, he departs; taking ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment, as a price or present for his healing. So Naaman came with his horses and his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times; and thy flesh shall come again unto thee, and thou shalt be clean. But Naaman was wroth, and went away; and said, Behold, I thought he will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters o Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned, and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith unto thee, Wash and be clean. Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. We may notice, that Naaman despised simple means, and desired to have pompous ones substituted. And that the advice of his servants was the means, which induced him to follow the directions of the prophet, without which his leprosy must have remained upon him. The Saviour's anointing the eyes of the blind man with clay, and his restoring sight, are worthy of consideration. Why was clay used, and not proper eye-salve? Because the power and blessing of God might not appear so conspicuous. Hence he would use means which would not appear to have any inherent virtue or efficacy, that the efficiency might appear manifest from God alone. Now let us attend

to the words of the text. To the man whose hand was withered, says the Saviour, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored whole as the other. The question now arises, Why was the man commanded to stretch forth his hand, when he laboured under a natural inability. I answer, because means or human exertion was to be made to appear, to be inseparably connected with the end, or the restoration of the hand. The moment the man made an effort to raise his hand, which he was unable of himself to do, power was communi cated from the Saviour to restore its vital energies, that it might be raised. Divine agency immediately accompanied human; and unless the man had made an attempt to comply with the command, we have not the smallest evidence, that his hand would have been restored. Though means are to be used, the power and excellence must appear to be from God. Thus we may see, that in time of sickness or some natural calamity human activity and means are necessary in order to obtain a blessing from him.

4th. *It is through the blessing of God and by human activity, that our natural talents are improved.* In the first period of our existence, we are human beings only in miniature. The works of nature and the privileges of society, are the great inlets of knowledge; but these are so varied and extensive, that we may make constant improvements in learning those things, which are becoming dependant and accountable beings. When we behold the wonders of creation, if we duly exercise our minds, we may contemplate the being and perfections of God; for the invisible things of him may be clearly seen, from the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. And from the blessings of educatin and society we may obtain clear and enlarged views of the various doctrines and duties of the gospel. Some have far more extensive opportunities of instruction than others; yet, still, in all cases much depends on

human activity. The light of creation, Providence, and revelation, must not be shut out of the mind, but improved, would we form consistent and exalted views of the character of God and of his wondrous works. It is not only through human activity, that the mind is expanded in all its faculties; but human exertions are necessary, that it make use of proper means, and be engaged in suitable employments. Our dispositions and manners depend much on our own forming. It is true, that our gifts and privileges are blessings from God; but our improvement of them, are inseparably connected with human activity.

5th. *It is through the blessing of God, that the minds of any are deeply impressed with a sense of divine truth; still the agency or activity of man is not excluded.* It is the work of grace, that any of the human race are awakened and convicted; for mankind, in a moral point of view, are asleep, and do not wish to be disturbed from their slumbers. The Holy Spirit is the great agent to awaken and convince men that they are sinners, and make them feel their guilt; but their activity is necessary in order to cherish the strivings of the Spirit. The light and force of divine truth, will now and then break in and shine into the minds of men, which, by their exertions, they may either kindle or quench. To have the mind habitually impressed and open to conviction, requires serious meditation and prayer. Some have their minds occupied with light and trifling thoughts, much of their time; because they are pleased with vain things, and exert themselves to bar the avenues of the soul against the arrows of conviction. On the other hand, those who have generally solemnity of mind, strive to banish sinful and vain thoughts as an enemy to seriousness. Some resort to the pleasures and amusements of life, that they may lose their serious impressions. Others seek serious company and religious conversation; deeply solicitous, lest they resist the strivings of the Spirit. From experience, and from the warnings and

cautions to men not to quench the Holy Spirit, we may see that human activity is a means of obtaining the blessing of having the mind deeply impressed with a sense of divine truth.

6th. *The work of conversion is truly the work of God; yet human activity is a means of obtaining this blessing.* To be converted, is to be created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. It is to be transformed from the kingdom of Satan, and to be brought into the kingdom of God's dear Son. To be brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light. But it is said to be the work of God, to take away the old and stony heart, and to give a new heart or a heart of flesh: that is, a heart of supreme love to God, repentance for sin, faith in the Son of God, and all other christian graces. Yet mankind are commanded to make them a new heart, and to exercise holy or gracious affections. Hence, we may be led to see in the work of conversion, that although the Lord is the efficient cause, yet man is active in the work. Divine and human agency are inseparably connected; and both essential, that the sinner may be born again. In this great and all-important, essential work, the time and degree of conviction are greatly varied. Some, for a considerable time, are distressed in their souls; and burdened, as it were, with the pains of hell. Others, with sharp and pungent convictions, are quickly delivered from the bondage of sin and death. Some are more peculiarly excited by terrour and guilt; others are most deeply impressed and affected in view of the grace, mercy, and forbearance of God. But the effect is the same; from children of darkness to become children of light. Perhaps some are ready to say with Nicodemus, How can these things be. Receive light from the words of the text, Stretch forth thine hand. The man, sensible of his natural inability, was stript of all hope or confidence in himself; therefore his only encouragement and trust, were in the compassion and power of the Saviour.

Thus he was enabled, and did stretch forth his hand. Then let those who despair of help in themselves, on the account of their moral inability, their guilt, pollution, and wretchedness, submit themselves to God, relying solely on his grace and mercy through his Son, for pardon and salvation. This is the straight and narrow way, that children of wrath and heirs of hell may become the children of God and heirs of heaven. It is through the grace of God alone, by the use of means and human activity, that any can escape the wrath to come, and lay hold on eternal life. Would any desire to have the deadly leprosy of sin healed by some pompous, external reformation or performance? They must be disappointed; for the great physician of souls, alone can heal them. Let them not, like Naaman, despise the means and way which God has appointed, and glory in the device of human wisdom. None can possibly merit heaven: and would they gladly purchase it with silver or gold, as Simon Magus would the gift of miracles, they and their money must perish together. As heavy laden, humble, penitent, of a broken and contrite heart, their language must be, God be merciful to me, a sinner. It was truly the work of God that the apostle Paul was converted; and yet how active was he in the work. The light from heaven brought him to the earth; and, with deep humility, he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord what wilt thou have me to do? And now, Behold, he prayeth. Here we have exhibited a most pungent, sudden conviction, and an instance of wonderful conversion. The trembling jailor, under keen conviction, cries out, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And with ready and active obedience, he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and was converted. Then let those who are dead in trespasses and sins, arise and call upon God, if peradventure the thoughts of their heart be forgiven them. Repentance is the gift of God; yet it is the sinner who repents and awakes to newness of

life. In this view we hear the command, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Mankind naturally are willingly bound with the bonds and adamantine chains of sin and death; and it is the agency of the divine Spirit, which makes them willing to be released, and active in being delivered from the powers of darkness. They are the willing slaves of sin; but divine grace enables them to become the willing servants of Christ. From christian experience, and from the examples recorded in the sacred oracles, we may be led to see, that human activity is connected as a means of obtaining the inestimable blessing of conversion, which is acknowledged to be the work of God.

7th. *Human activity is a means of obtaining the blessing of sanctification from God.* In conversion that good work is begun, which is to be perfected unto the day of Jesus Christ. The soul that is renewed by the Spirit of God, is to grow in grace and christian knowledge. And the one who is active and faithful, will have his path like that of the just, which groweth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. The christian warfare cannot be successfully maintained without persevering, human exertions; although thanks belongeth to God, who giveth the victory. The scriptural direction on this subject is, Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God, who worketh in you to will and to do, of his own good pleasure. Although believers are dependant on the grace of God, that they be more and more conformed to the image of his Son, still their activity and exertions are not to be diminished. They must lead watchful, prayerful, and godly lives; and glorify God in their bodies and spirits, which are his. The scriptures abound with exhortations, warnings, and encouragements towards believers, that they be not slothful; but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Whilst they are not to trust in themselves, but in God,

who quickeneth them: still the manner in which they must trust in him, is only by pressing forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus. Hence human activity is a means of obtaining the blessing of sanctification from God.

IMPROVEMENT.

1st. If human activity is a means of obtaining blessings from God, then we may see, *that they who neglect the means of grace, neglect their own salvation.* We have seen, from this subject, that both in the natural and moral world, the Lord has established means in order to obtain blessings; and they who neglect them, forsake their own mercies. The means of the gospel are external and internal. The external, are the Sabbath, the preaching or reading of the word, and other opportunities of instruction. The internal, are serious meditation, reflection, secret prayer, and a determination to shun evil and cleave to that which is good. And whilst we behold some highly prizing the means of grace, we may see them lightly esteemed by others. So whilst the same means are proving a savour of life unto life to some, to others they are a savour of death unto death. Gospel means serve either to render the mind serious, and renew the heart; or they serve to harden those who resist them. They must prove means of conviction, conversion, sanctification, and salvation; or of an aggravated condemnation. They will not remain void; but will be a means of preparing for heaven, or of sinking the soul deeper in hell. It is a solemn truth, that to neglect the means of grace, is to neglect our own salvation.

2d. If human activity is a means of obtaining blessings from God, by contrast we may see, *that there must be activity to draw down his curse.* Some people imagine sin to be a mere calamity sent upon them, which they abhor, and from which they are groaning to be delivered. But would they open

their eyes, they would see that they roll sin as a sweet morsel under their tongues, and that they are not anxious to be freed from it; but only from the ways of sin, which is the second death. They who drink down iniquity as the ox drinketh water, love all the sins in which they indulge; although they may dread their future punishment. Do any imagine that necessity or fate has fast bound them with the slavish chains of sin? Mistaken souls! Their own activity, their repeatedly hardening their hearts against the truth, their fixed habits of sinning, are the barriers and mountains in the way of their salvation. They are the active agents in forming their shackles of sin; and slaves to Satan, not by fatality, but by being willingly led as his captives. Let not any be deceived, and imagine they hate sin, merely because they have a slavish fear of punishment. They who hate it, seek to be delivered from its internal dominion, as from a loathsome and deadly leprosy of soul. They fold not their hands together in idle wishes, but awake to righteousness. To be dead in sin is not a mere calamity, but it is to be active in the ways of unrighteousness, and to love the paths of disobedience.

3d. From this subject we may see, *that a person may be brought near the kingdom of God, and still fail of salvation.* Although conversion is an instantaneous work, wrought by the Spirit of God, yet there are previous stages of awakening and conviction. And a person may be brought near that stedfast degree of seriousness and anxiety for his soul, in which the Lord generally shows mercy, and yet go back. He may by degrees turn back from the very gate of heaven, and at last have his conscience seared as with a hot iron. An affecting and alarming truth, which should sink with deep weight into the minds of the thoughtful. How heart-rending must it be to any in wo, to look back into this world, and see that they were just entering into the kingdom of God, and yet failed of salvation.

4th. The subject naturally suggests the inquiry, *Why stand ye here all the day idle?* Whether at the sixth, ninth, or eleventh hour, the Saviour calls to work in his vineyard. Then let youth, middle aged, and aged, feel interested in this subject, and work while it is called to-day; for the night shortly cometh in which no man can work. There is work enough yet to do, and the reward is as great and glorious as is worthy a God to bestow. Heaven, earth, and hell, call loudly upon all to be active in doing the will of their heavenly Father. Time and eternity present motives of infinite magnitude. The salvation of the soul demands, That whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Shall a mortal creature in view of his immortal interests, remain idle? Rather by activity let us bear much fruit towards God, that so a glorious entrance shall be administered into the kingdom of his Son in eternal life. *Amen.*

SERMON IX.

THE VALUE AND USE OF MONEY.

Ecclesiastes x. 19.

Money answereth all things.

To esteem every thing according to its real worth, is the part of true wisdom. But, for this it is necessary to have correct views of things earthly and temporal; and of those that are heavenly and eternal. As mankind are in a state of apostacy from God, they are prone to idolize the good things of this life, and to make temporary pleasures their chief joy. On the other hand, some of a religious and melancholy turn of mind, have turned away from the sweets of social life, have sought solitary retreat, shut themselves up in cells, and lived a secluded and monastick life. But, still it is true, the Lord has given to man the world to be used, though not to be abused. Earthly enjoyments should not be viewed with indifference, for they demand gratitude and thankfulness. It is only by comparison, or by contrasting them with the glorious and eternal blessings of the gospel, that they are to be considered as vanity, and to sink into nothing. All the blessings of this life are worthy of some attention; and says Solomon, Money answereth all things.

The experience of every one, as well as other passages of scripture, evince that the word *all*, is not used in this place in its universal and unlimited import. Money will not answer all things, in every respect that might be mentioned; but still, in a certain sense, it is true, that it does or would answer all things. It answers for all the purposes for which it

is designed. There is a value attached to it, which renders it useful; and for which it is desirable to be obtained. No doubt the true import of the words of the text is this, Money will answer all things as it respects the purposes of commerce. In order to illustrate this idea, I shall undertake to show the value and use of money, by noticing some desirable purposes which it answers.

1st. *For money the necessities of life may be obtained.* It will buy food and raiment for the sustenance of life. Although mankind are directed to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, still it is essential to human existence, that the body be fed and clothed. That bread of life which cometh down from heaven, is infinitely more valuable for the soul than earthly bread is for the body; but this truth does not in the least invalidate the fact, that without provision for eating and drinking, death would be the inevitable consequence. And no case perhaps can be mentioned, where food and raiment could not be obtained from any one for money, unless in a time of siege or necessity, when individuals would only have a bare pittance merely sufficient to prevent final starvation. As it is important, that life should be prolonged; so is it equally necessary, that the means of life be procured. But money is the most convenient, advantageous, and effectual for this. Various other things might be mentioned as the necessities of life, and they might be obtained by various means of commerce; yet certainly money will have the pre-eminence as the best circulating medium.

2d. *Money is valuable; for with it not only the necessities, but the varied comforts and conveniences of life may be procured.* The privileges and enjoyments of this world are many and greatly diversified. And though they be not essential to mere existence or subsistence; still they are desirable, and worthy of some degree of attention. It is not only commendable to seek for food, but for that which is wholesome and

agreeable; and to procure that raiment, which is decent. To eat and drink of the bounties of Providence, those things that are palatable, is no sin; for they are the gifts of God to be used with delight, and to be received as mercies and favours, bestowed by an invisible hand. To be clothed in a manner suitable to the age and society in which we live, is becoming; and they who are prosperous, certainly may dress genteely without being censured. A small, tight hut might shelter from the inclemencies of the weather; but money gives an ability to erect a building more for taste, elegance, convenience, and enjoyment. Many men are able to perform journeys on foot; and others are obliged to prosecute them with an inferiour beast, and an inconvenient carriage. But who would not wish to travel, whether for business or pleasure, with excellent equipage, that he may journey with ease and appear with respectability? Money furnishes the most ready and desirable means of conveyance, whether by water or land; gives a person the power of visiting cities and countries, museums and monuments, and other interesting works both of nature and art. It was money which enabled Solomon to make great works, to build houses, to plant vineyards, to make gardens and orchards, to plant trees in them of all kinds of fruits, and to have many other of the conveniences and delights of life. It is true, the poor have no right to complain, or to murmur against the Providence of God; but to be grateful for the favours they enjoy, and thus be content with their situation. For them to be uneasy, dissatisfied, and restless, is a sin. Notwithstanding the wealthy have superiour advantages; and, as they are bound to be more thankful, this shows that their situation is more eligible. And although none may envy those whose circumstances in life are far more agreeable and honourable than theirs, still they are encouraged to use all prudent and lawful means, that they may possess and enjoy

the varied earthly comforts, even in abundance. The conveniences, privileges, and enjoyments in our present state are innumerable; hence we may see, how valuable and useful is money; for it brings them all within our reach, and exalts our station in life.

3d. Money enables those who have it, to buy and sell to advantage, and to increase their property by improving times and opportunities. The trite expression, that money begets money, has much truth in it; and it might be illustrated and proved in various ways. The interest which the principal commands, to those who have considerable sums of money, yields them a comfortable support. Almost every thing in the commercial or bartering world, may be obtained for it at a lower rate than can be done for other commodities. A man may be a speculator, and yet be an honest man; or be free from the charge of grinding the face of the poor. He may purchase the property of his neighbour at a fair price, when it is low, and do him a kindness. If it afterwards rise in value, he may dispose of it at an advanced price, without injuring any one, although his money has given him an important advantage. How often, and how many men feel themselves straightened in their circumstances, and unable to prosecute their business advantageously for the want of the valuable, convenient, circulating medium. How desirable then to have some in possession, or at command.

4th. Money gives an ability to prosecute studies, in order to acquire a liberal education. To a person having a taste for improvement, it would be very gratifying to have the ability to purchase a variety of interesting books in order to have an extensive library. To be able to obtain a good education, or to be well versed in the several branches of useful literature, is an object of importance to every one. But many, in many parts of our highly favoured land, are denied this for the want of money. How must the heart of every parent who is interested in the pros-

pect, respectability, and welfare of his children, glow with a laudable desire to see them well instructed in the necessary and polite arts and sciences. But money can send youth to a good school, an excellent academy, or to a celebrated college, if expedient. To be well educated and informed, is not a mere ornamental accomplishment; but it is to have the mind enlarged, and to be prepared for more extensive usefulness. It is education that improves superiour talents; that brightens, polishes, and enlarges moderate ones. How useful then is money to furnish all aids, means, and opportunities of improvement!

5th. Money is sometimes the means of lengthening out the lives of mankind. Not that all the gold and silver in the world can purchase a release one hour from death, or that they can procure the gift of miraculous healings. The contrary of this, is taught in the answer of Peter, to Simon the sorceror, when he said, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Not only do some sinful courses cause some of the wicked not to live out half their days; but poverty and the want of means, do shorten the lives of some. Let two examples be mentioned. Thousands who have been verging to a fatal disease, have had the ability to journey, to experience a favourable climate, and to bring to their aid every possible remedy; and these have been the means of restoring their health, and adding years to their days. But thousands of others in the same circumstances of declining health, have been unable to enjoy similar means and advantages; and they soon are brought to a sick and dying bed. Again, thousands have been attacked with some threatening, fatal, local complaint; but their ability procured speedy and most skilful medical aid, and their lives have been prolonged. Thousands of others alike afflicted, have been unable to obtain the most eminent and skilful physicians, and have fallen a ready prey to their ra-

ging disease. How valuable and useful,then,is money! And the scriptures do not teach that money, but that the love of money is the root of all evil. A covetous desire of getting, and an avaricious disposition of hoarding up earthly treasures, are the sole ground of any inconvenience or injury. Moreover, we are taught, They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. But this expression teaches the wrong pursuit and abuse of the manifold blessings of life. An anxiety merely to be rich, manifests a sordid disposition, and discovers a wicked heart. To be influenced by such a spirit or motive, in accumulating property, is base and criminal. Certainly every one would wish to be in comfortable circumstances; and to be rich, is no sin. Riches may be abused or they may be sought unlawfully. But as money answers all things, as it respects the purposes of commerce and the conveniences of life, so in some instances it is the means or occasion of lengthening out life.

6th. *Money enables mankind to assist the poor, and relieve the distressed.* And certainly this is not a trifling consideration to a person of a generous and humane disposition. The mind that is possessed of only the common feelings of humanity, must experience agreeable sensations in relieving the distresses of mankind; and to be unable to do this for the want of money, would be painful to the same mind. Is it desirable and gratifying, now and then to give aid to our needy fellow mortals? How pleasing, and what abundant joy, then, would arise to a liberal soul, to have the power to be able always to give some assistance or relief to a fellow sufferer, even as often as the expediency of giving might be known. The scriptures declare, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Then not to be able to give to proper objects of charity, must be considered as an affliction, and should be numbered as one of the calamities of

human life. How much a man can promote human happiness, who is both able and willing to be charitable, according to the dictates of wisdom and conscience. And how have the breasts of many been pained, because their circumstances were such that they had not money to assist the poor, nor relieve the distressed.

7th. *Money is necessary for the support of society, and for effecting important enterprises.* Civil institutions, that are of much importance, are attended with considerable expense. As the framing and supporting of wise and wholesome laws, deeply interest any community, so money may be said to be a spring to its exertion and prosperity. The branches of social society are various, and no one of them can flourish without the means of support from persons of property. The stated preaching of the gospel is one of the greatest blessings with which any people was ever yet favoured. But, for a divine to be skilful or eminent in his profession, he should not be perplexed with secular concerns. Then, if a people would support a minister of the gospel comfortably, they will be under the necessity of contributing liberally according to their ability. Any great undertaking of publick utility, demands large sums of money. How important are good roads, bridges, and canals! How useful and valuable, then, the means by which they are made! How have the most useful inventions and machines had their origin from money! How important is an able attorney in a weighty and critical cause! But his best fee is money. How valuable then, how desirable!

8th. *It is by money, that the gospel and its attendant blessings are sent from Christian lands, to those that are Heathen or Pagan.* Is our own land highly favoured of heaven, as it respects the means and glorious privileges of the gospel? To our forefathers, and even to other nations we are indebted for these; as they flow to us in consequence of their exertions and

expenditures. Are those nations, who are yet groping in moral darkness, to enjoy the enlightening and benign influence of the gospel? The money of christian societies, is to be the medium of effecting such unspeakable blessings. And must not a heart of charity or humanity grieve, to have little or no part in this, for the want of ability? How desirable to serious and reflecting minds, to have a dollar to spare frequently, to send a Bible and Testament to some destitute poor family! When we hear of the labours and successes of domestick or foreign missionaries, do not our hearts burn to give a helping hand by our alms, as well as by our prayers? If we are unable to comprehend the extensive and blessed effects of such exertions, we may see that money is calculated to answer very desirable purposes. How does it answer not only all the purposes of commerce, but what charitable and benevolent ends are promoted by this means!

IMPROVEMENT.

1st. If money is so valuable, and answers so many important purposes as we have heard, then this subject must come with a reproof to the idle and prodigal like a two-edged sword. Is any one denied the privileges and enjoyments, which have been mentioned, and is he unable to bear a suitable part in the support of the various branches of society for the want of money? But why? Have idleness, or prodigality rendered him unable? Then how should mortification, shame, and conscience be awake in his breast. His inability is for his disgrace before men, and his guilt before God. The acquisition of earthly good things demands seasonable attention, and forbids that time be squandered in sloth or rioting. If any one is in a state of poverty, to whose conduct, industry, economy, and frugality bear favourable testimony, such an one is a worthy person, and deserves not only pity, but consolation and assistance from his fellow men.

They, who by their criminal conduct, render themselves unable to bear their part in the various duties of social, civil, or religious life, do at the same time, render themselves the nuisances of the world, and the burden of mankind. The idle and prodigal do not only deprive themselves of the various comforts mentioned, but they heap up manifold calamities and sorrows upon others.

2d. If money will answer so many desirable purposes as we have seen; then we may conclude, *that true religion is incomparably excellent, and the one thing needful.* This is what will answer and effect that which money was never designed to do. This is calculated to give true submission and contentment in a state of affliction and poverty; and thus render the poor man happy, and in a certain sense, rich. This gives peace to a troubled conscience, is a balm for a broken and contrite heart, and enables the soul to sing the triumphant song of victory, in the solemn hour of death. This is indeed wisdom and excellence, which avails in time, and flourishes in eternity. Says Solomon, Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver; and the gain thereof, than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand, riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness; and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her. How excellent and essential then, this heavenly treasure, these durable riches, which will avail when time shall be no longer; and crown the soul with glorious immortality.

3d. If money is calculated to answer all the purposes of commerce, and many other valuable purposes in life, *then it is proper to be afflicted, and grieve for the loss of property.* Sometimes by fire, or at sea, or by

the knavery of a neighbour, a man is at once stript of a fortune, and deprived of all his earthly substance. But such losses are real calamities, and are reasons why we should be afflicted in some measure. If we are not to be insensible to the advantages of property, surely we are not to be insensible, that it is a disadvantage, and a natural evil when we are suddenly deprived of an earthly treasure. Then we may clearly see, in the

4th. Place, *that to be destitute of a heavenly treasure, demands, that for this we should be much more grievously afflicted.* If property has some value, the pearl of great price is infinitely more valuable. But it may be lost. How solemn and striking the inquiry of the Saviour! What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? It is answered in the Psalms, That the redemption of the soul ceaseth for ever. Surely, then, there is abundant reason for impenitent sinners, for all who have not believed to the saving of their souls; and by evangelical repentance made their peace with God, to be afflicted and mourn in the anguish of their spirit.

5th. Then let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: *Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.* But to do this we must neglect neither temporal nor eternal concerns. We must let the things of time have their proper place; and those of eternity, their due weight. A man who has proper views, and who is under the proper influence of a christian spirit, will have a suitable regard for earthly concerns and enjoyments, and will not be slothful in business; while he is fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. What an unspeakable privilege that we may pursue and enjoy all the endearments of life; and, at the same time, have our affections on things above, and be laying up a glorious treasure for eternity. How happy must that man be, whose conduct is consistent in the things of this world and

in those of religion. May industry and economy, liberality and charity, and a heart devoted to the service of God, be our happy lot in time. May we be the servants of Christ, by seeking to obey all the commands of his Father, and at last hear the blessed plaudit, of Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord. *Amen.*

SERMON X.

THE SERVICE OF GOD AND MAMMON IMPOSSIBLE.

Matthew vi. 24.

Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

THIS is the declaration of him, who spake as never man spake. It contains an important truth, which should be clearly unders tood; for errour in our faith is most intimately connected with erroneous practice. As mankind by nature have hearts of enmity against God, so they are opposed to his true character, his providential government, and righteous requirements. Notwithstanding, the fancied goodness of men, even in an unrenewed state, cause many to be slow of heart to believe that the Lord has a controversy with them. And though they read, yet how little do they realize, That the friendship of the world is enmity with God; that whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God. Great exertions are necessary to convince them of their true apostate character and condition; for they plead they are not sensible of the odious nature and criminality of the moral exercises of their hearts. Perhaps they confess, they have not done much in their lives to please God; still, they hope to be pitied for their imperfections, since they have never been guilty of any very great, outbreaking sins. And though with hearts supremely attached to the world, they think to render service acceptable to God. But, in opposition to such views, the Saviour declares, No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to

the one, and despise the other: Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

Mammon is a Syriack word for riches, and is significant of any earthly treasure or interest. Hence, we are taught in the words of the text, the impossibility of being the servants of both God and the world. And the term, *world*, is to be understood in its most extensive import; and to include any earthly good, possession, honour, pleasure, or enjoyment whatever.

That we may have a clear view of this subject, a few observations will be made to point out the character of a true and faithful servant. Every one must be sensible, that there is an essential difference in its very nature between any service that is mercenary, and that which is loyal.

Then a true and faithful servant is one, who devotes his whole time to the service of his master, and who exerts all his skill and ability to promote his master's interest, from a spirit of cheerfulness or voluntary obedience. The time of a servant is not his own; but his master's, to whom he belongs, and whose property he is. And a faithful servant will not spend this time in idleness, or vain amusements, nor forsake the service of his master, to attend the concerns of others. A servant, who is not devoted to his master's interest, but absents his business, is called unfaithful. On the contrary, the one who is faithful, is ever ready, at the call of his master, to engage in his employment; for he considers his time and service as the proper claim of the one to whom he belongs.

Moreover, a faithful servant will exert all his talents, and improve every seasonable opportunity, to promote his master's interest. A servant might be daily employed about the requirements of his master, and yet not execute them according to his knowledge and capacity. But such an one would be like a mere mercenary hireling; for a true and faithful servant will prosecute the concerns of his master with his utmost skill and ability.

Moreover, a loyal servant is one who is pleased with his master, and cordially engages in his service. A master could put no confidence in his servant, if he were not attached to him from upright affections of heart. He could not safely trust him with his affairs, except his eye were upon him, if he did not render cheerful obedience. Doubtless all will grant how essential it is, that a servant be pleased with his master, and heartily engage in his service, in order to have the character of a true and faithful servant.

Now let us notice some of the claims of God and Mammon, and from their contrast we may see the impossibility of serving both.

The Lord demands us to spend all our time, and employ all our talents in his service, from a heart of supreme love to his character, and with a spirit of filial obedience. Time is the only state of probation for mortals to prepare for eternity; hence the command, Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. Then the great end of our being, is to serve the Lord in all our ways; and thus lay up durable riches, and secure a glorious and everlasting inheritance.

But more particularly the Lord enjoins it upon us to regard him in all the common concerns of life. Whether therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. All our worldly concerns must be subservient to his will, and the interest of his moral kingdom. If we have property, or learning, or extensive influence in society, they must be devoted to his service. Even when we labour for the necessities, comforts, and conveniences of life, we must not esteem these as our treasure; but set our affections on things above, and be laying up for ourselves a treasure in heaven.

But Mammon says, Regard worldly concerns with special care, and be satisfied with a portion beneath the sun. Idolize riches, if you have them; and if not, let your whole soul pant for them, or for some earthly

good, as the one thing needful. If you pursue worldly pleasures and advantages with such negligence, as to let your thoughts be wandering to the heavens as your chief joy, you have no great regard for me, therefore I cannot call you my servant.

The Lord enjoins it upon us to be honest in all our dealings with mankind, and not defraud or injure our neighbour. His commands are, Love your neighbour as yourself. Look not every man on his own things; but every man also on the things of others. And as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them; for this is the law and the prophets. Mammon says, Others defraud, and take every advantage they can; and you must do so too, or you cannot live. If others cheat and strive to over-reach, you must do the same, or you will never get along in the world, so as to make any respectable appearance in the eyes of mankind. If it will promote your worldly interest best to be honest and just in your dealings with some men, I would have you be upright with them; but still you must always consider it to be sufficient for you to look well to your own concerns, and have a sole regard for yourself.

God enjoins it upon us as a duty and privilege, to be charitable and liberal of the good things he has given us; to assist the poor, relieve the distressed, and support the important interest of his cause. With cheering words of encouragement he says, The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself.

The language of Mammon is, If you are always giving, you will always be poor; so you must keep what you have got, and get what you can. When you behold objects of charity and distress, shut up all bowels of compassion, for fear your gift will not be wisely bestowed. And do not promote religious concerns, till you feel yourself in safety in all your worldly circumstances.

God commands us, To remember the Sabbath-day

to keep it holy. The whole day must be spent in the varied private, social, and publick duties of religion. Both man and beast, on that day, are to rest from their labours, even in the time of earing and harvest. The duty of assembling together for publick devotion, and for the honour of God's holy name, and our growth in knowledge and grace, is clearly pointed out. On his holy day, we are not to think our own thoughts: that is, not let our minds be filled with perplexing cares about temporary affairs; but so to improve it, that it prove a day of preparation for a glorious and eternal Sabbath of rest.

Mammon, on the other hand, says, You must not attend publick worship on the Sabbath, unless your secular concerns be all regulated. Otherwise, you must stay at home, and see to things, or else your business will hurry you, before the close of the next week. If the cause of God does require your attendance in his house; yet one half of the day will be sufficient for you, who have so many calls to which you must attend, and who are already pretty well informed. You may find some sermon, which will be more instructive than the one your minister will preach; besides you can read in the evening by your fire-side. Moreover, in harvest time, especially, you must work on the Lord's day; for, if you should let one fair day slip, you may sustain considerable loss. And you may trade on that day for the sake of gain, if you are only careful to keep your bargain secret. Books may then be posted, to save time; and accounts settled, if your neighbour be willing. Or, if you are so far from your residence with your horse, carriage, or team, that you cannot attend publick worship in your own vicinity on that day, you may as well prosecute your journey. Mammon says, It will be expensive, if you have to pay for the keeping of yourself and horses; so you had better travel on, and make haste home. And whenever you do attend divine service in the house of God, would you have

your soul delighted? let it be by having your thoughts dwell on what you have done and gained, during the last week; and by laying plans, how to prosecute your business, through the next.

God demands family worship; and threatens with a curse, those families that call not upon his name. The evening and morning sacrifice of thanksgiving, prayer, and praise must be offered to him from the family altar, and be considered a reasonable service.

Mammon says, Confine this duty to the Sabbath, and even then esteem it no desirable privilege; but account it as a weariness and burden of the soul. To lose half an hour every morning and evening in religious duties, especially when there is a multiplicity of business on hand, would be a serious and unnecessary evil.

The Lord commands us to serve him with all our hearts. His language is, My son, give me thine heart. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and him only shalt thou serve. He complained of some who honoured him with their lips, because their hearts were far from him. He does not consider any service as true obedience, unless it proceed from a heart of supreme love to his character, and delight in his service. Therefore, he does not call any his true servants, who do not yield entire and cordial obedience.

Mammon says, Give me the heart, or you are none of my servants. Give me the chief place in your thoughts and affections, or else you will be counted the servant of another master. God holds forth the rich treasures of his holy word, for the meditation and delight of our souls. He exhibits himself as the fountain and source of blessedness, to be the object of our pursuit and highest joy. He proffers the glorious and inconceivable rewards of the righteous, as an excitement to faithfulness in his service. He calls upon the sons of men to look at the things which are unseen and eternal, and prepare

for mansions of immortal glory. Mammon holds forth herself in various forms, with all her worldly charms to allure mankind to serve her most faithfully. Worldly riches, honours, and prospects are presented to engage the highest attention and affections of men. She would have them prefer worldly and temporal enjoyments, to those which are heavenly and eternal. Thus by contrast, as it respects the nature and requirements of God and Mammon, we may see the impossibility of serving both. Then he, who loves and holds to the world as his master, will, whether he have little or much in the affections of his heart, be an enemy and despiser of God. But he who loves and cleaves to the service of God, will renounce the friendship, and despise the frown of the world. Thus the Saviour has declared, No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other: Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

IMPROVEMENT.

1st. We may see *why the scriptures call Mammon, the Mammon of unrighteousness.* It is because mankind use unlawful means to obtain it; as oppression, theft, violence, and other vicious ways. In such instances they despise the authority of God to obtain Mammon; disregard his law, and the peace and prosperity of their fellow men. The civil law may have some restraint upon them; but we are sensible, that this is ineffectual to restrain many from openly vicious courses. Riches, or the acquiring of earthly good things, are not, in themselves, considered sinful; for by a proper management and arrangement of our worldly concerns, in subordination to religion, we may render them as a part of God's service. But worldly men make their religion subservient to the interest of Mammon; and whatever gratifies or delights mankind the most, will be pursued with

eagerness. Then, if men have an inordinate desire for self gratification from the pleasures which Mammon affords, they will be led into all manner of unrighteousness, that they may indulge ungoverned appetites, and gratify sinful inclinations and passions. Thus the inordinate desire of gratifying their avarice, their ambition, and other sinful lusts, hurries them on to Sabbath breaking, cheating, lying, robbing, and even to the crime of murder. Hence we see, when the thoughts and affections of men, are violent and criminal for the pleasures of Mammon, they excite to overt acts of iniquity, and all manner of unrighteousness.

2d. We may see, the most of the excuses that are made for neglecting religious duties, and doing what the Lord forbids, amount to a confession *that it is more important to serve Mammon than to serve God.* The reason why people work in the field, or shop, or journey on the Sabbath is, Mammon holds them fast with her claims. They know the Lord forbids such things; but they cannot obey him, when they have such a strong and cordial regard for another master. Some persons make it convenient to attend publick worship occasionally, but not statedly; and they can scarcely find leisure to attend church meetings, or religious conferences and prayer meetings; because Mammon hurries them with a multiplicity of her engagements. They cannot find time for reading the holy scriptures daily, for evening and morning devotion, for giving thanks for their daily food, or for the duties of the closet; for the god of this world troubles them frequently with very urgent and imperious calls. The most of the excuses that are made for neglecting the all-important duties of religion, are, my worldly concerns hurry me; my engagements bind me; and they are of so much importance that I am necessitated to neglect these duties. In these and other instances, confessions are virtually made,

that it is deemed more suitable and important to serve Mammon, than it is to serve God.

3d. Let us examine ourselves, and determine whether God or whether Mammon, have the chief place in our thoughts, affections, and pursuits; and then we shall decide whose servants we are. If it be our great inquiry and heart's desire, to know and do the will of God, to serve him with our whole hearts, we are his servants, and shall reap the glorious rewards of the righteous. But, if we be anxious to know how we can gratify ourselves, by pursuing the pleasures of Mammon as our chief joy, we are her servants, and are preparing to reap the rewards of unrighteousness. Let us inquire, What we do more than others? Do we exceed them in morality and liberality? Still, who has our hearts? If we have not a supreme regard for the honour and glory of God in our works, we are as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal; and shall appear as unfaithful stewards, in that we chose a portion, which has the inscription, vanity of vanities. The Lord is jealous for the honour of his great name, and he calls the covetous man an idolater. And although men do not worship idols and images in the form and shape of those of the heathens, yet they are as really guilty of idolatry, by idolizing Mammon, or setting the world uppermost in their hearts. If we place our affections supremely on God, on heavenly and divine things, we take them from the world; but if we exercise our noblest affections in favour of Mammon, we deny them to God. Some persons say, We will devote a little of our time in the service of God, we will keep the Sabbath so far as to spend our time in a serious manner. But their hearts are given to Mammon, and buried in the cares of the world; therefore they cannot be the servants of God. Others are called to labour, and eat bread in the sweat of their brow; but the Lord has their hearts, therefore

they cannot be the servants of Mammon. The Lord looks upon all services, which do not proceed from a heart devoted to him, as hypocrisy, or solemn mockery. They who consider it sufficient to serve him on the Sabbath, and a little on other days, should seriously inquire and examine, who has the most hearty affections of their souls. They should not be deceived; for God is not mocked. He knows and calls all his enemies, whatever their pretensions or performances, if they have not his love shed abroad in their hearts. Suffer one more remark. When men cannot part with earthly things for the cause of God, but choose rather to part with their interest in spiritual than in temporal blessings, they certainly cleave to them more than to God, and him they comparatively despise. Let us remember, that mankind are servants to whatever they make their chief concern or pursuit. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are, to whom ye obey? Then whatever engages the thoughts and affections of men supremely, is their God. If the Lord possess their hearts, he is their God: but, if the world have their hearts, Mammon is their god.

4th. Let all be exhorted to comply with the direction of the Saviour, *and make to themselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness.* Whatever earthly good things we possess, let us realize that these are entrusted to us as stewards, and that we must render an account to God for our stewardship. We may be so covetous of earthly gifts as to exclude our souls from spiritual and eternal blessings. We may be so glued to the enjoyments of this life, that instead of their causing our souls to ascend with gratitude and thankfulness to heaven, they will drag them down to hell. There have been instances of persons in time of fire, war, shipwreck, and other perilous situations, who, foolish and presumptuous to save their goods, have lost their lives. So may we be so heavily laden

with the earth, that our souls will be unable to ascend to heaven, and lay hold on eternal life. How kind the exhortation, then, To spend a suitable portion of Mammon in deeds of piety and charity, that many being benefited by these gifts, may pray for blessings on us as their benefactors. With what satisfaction may the faithful steward expect the hour of dissolution, and the coming of his Lord, and anticipat ethe joy of being then welcomed by such friends to the regions of perfect felicity. But, if men idolize their riches, and spend all upon themselves, they may expect to be turned out of their stewardship, and cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. If we do not have mercy on the poor, in vain may we hope for mercy from God: For, if any man have this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? The cries of the oppressed and neglected poor, will testify against unfaithful stewards, to their condemnation; but the prayers of widows and orphans for their pious benefactors, will testify for them, that they were wise and faithful stewards. And, when they leave this world, such as have died before them and gone to glory, may be considered as standing ready to welcome them to their everlasting habitations. Earthly riches may be exchanged for heavenly; and temporal goods, for those which are eternal. The poor, the needy, and distressed, give us an opportunity of acquiring inconceivable gain. And who would not part with perishable objects, for those which are imperishable? Who would not give or lend things of trifling value, for a moment, and then receive those of inestimable value? How benignant and blessed the exhortation of the Saviour, Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. *Amen.*

SERMON XI.

DESIRABLE EFFECTS OF A PREACHED GOSPEL.

Mark xvi. 15.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

THESE words are the commission of the divine Redeemer to his eleven apostles. After that he was risen from the dead, he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat. But shortly he was to ascend up into heaven, to sit at the right hand of the throne of God, no more to be personally present with his disciples on earth. And although this charge was given to the immediate attendants, and personal followers of the blessed Saviour; yet, it is equally applicable, and addressed to all who should henceforth sustain the character of his publick ministers. The same original phrase, which is translated every creature, is also rendered the whole human race. The latter is doubtless the most rational and correct translation. Hence, the commission of the apostles of Christ, extends to every creature throughout the world; so that wherever a human being is found, they are authorized and commanded to preach to him the gospel. They and their successors, are to go forth with unwearied exertions to the ends of the earth, as heralds of the gospel, till every nation, kindred, and tongue under the whole heaven, should enjoy its rich blessing. This is in exact accordance with the declaration of the angel of the Lord to the shepherds, who were keeping watch over their flock by night. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy,

which shall be to all people. Before the advent of the Saviour, the glorious privileges of divine revelation, were chiefly confined to the Jews. And whilst he continued in the flesh, few of the Gentiles, comparatively, had the gospel preached to them; but, before the end of time, from the rising to the setting of the sun, both Jew and Gentile must enjoy its divine and meridian light. The gospel is good news; for, to a guilty and ruined world, it opens a door of hope, and publishes the way of salvation. Hence, to preach the gospel, is to announce the counsels of heaven, revealed to man; that he may be saved from sin and death, and made an heir of eternal life. But to accomplish this great and glorious end, its essential doctrines and duties must be clearly unfolded, that God may be exalted and glorified, whilst sinners are saved.

These remarks may lead us to see, that the first important doctrine, in preaching the gospel, *is to unfold the character of God.* His being and perfections should clearly be held forth to the view of mankind, that they may form consistent and exalted views of his absolutely perfect, his infinitely glorious, and amiable character. His eternity and infinity, his self-existence and independence, his omnipotence and omniscience, must be maintained; whilst he is proclaimed the supreme, moral Governour of all finite, intelligent beings, their great law-giver and final Judge. His infinitely holy nature, must be declared as that moral perfection of his character, which renders him worthy of the supreme love of all created intelligences, and which is well pleased with righteousness; but, which hateth all the workers of iniquity with perfect hatred. Grace and mercy must be proved to be perfections, belonging to the moral character of God, or in vain would be the attempt to show, that he could possibly be reconciled to any of his moral subjects, who had once rebelled against him. The first and fundamental

doctrine of revealed religion, is that of a God, as the only proper object of religious worship, the first cause and last end of all things, and who possesses every infinite possible perfection.

2d. *The character of man must be clearly exhibited, in the preaching of the gospel; and that in his fallen, and perishing state.* Unless the entirely sinful and odious nature, and deeply rooted depravity of the human heart; and the helpless, hopeless condition of man by the deeds of the law, be made to appear, he will in vain seek to be justified by works. The law must be set home upon his conscience in its spirituality that he feel the force of the declaration, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law to do them. Except mankind see the plague of their own hearts as an infectious and deadly leprosy, they will never desire to be delivered from its indwelling corruptions, as from a body of sin and death. If they are not brought, through the influence of the gospel, to realize that sin is exceedingly sinful, they will never admire and highly prize divine grace; nor exclaim, God be merciful to me a sinner.

3d. To preach the gospel, it is essential that the person and character of Christ be clearly exhibited in their true scriptural light. His atoning sufferings and death are the only ground of pardon and acceptance with a holy and offended God for any of this guilty and ruined world. And how important, that perishing sinners have clear conceptions and just views of the only foundation of any of their hopes for deliverance from endless wo. This subject was so important in the view of the apostle Paul, that to the Corinthians, he says, I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. He considered his character, his holy life, and efficacious death as the centre, the substance, and foundation of the gospel. How can a sinner, sensible of his own guilt and wretchedness, trust his

immortal interests in the hands of a Saviour without a full conviction, that the Father was well pleased with his righteousness, and that he could obtain eternal redemption through his blood? As perfect humanity was necessary in the character of the only Mediator between God and man, that he might render a life of sinless obedience to the law, and make an atoning sacrifice for sin; so complete divinity was also essential to render infinite dignity and efficacy to his atoning righteousness by sufferings and death. As, without the shedding of blood, there could be no remission of sin, so without an exhibition of those blessed truths, which relate to the person and character, the life and death of Christ, the gospel cannot be successfully preached.

4th. *The necessity of being born again, of repentance, faith, and a godly life, in order to the obtaining of final salvation, must be announced in the preaching of the gospel.* The Holy Spirit is the great Agent, by whom rebellious man is made willing in the day of God's power, to submit to him, and to receive the Saviour as he is freely offered in the gospel. And without his renewing and saving influence, none could possibly be saved; for except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Repentance is the gift of God, the Holy Spirit, and without which all must perish. His agency produceth faith, without which it is impossible to please God; and he enableth believers to persevere in well-doing, till the work of grace is perfected in their hearts. The gospel not only teaches what mankind are by nature; but what they must be by grace, to obtain the pardon of their sins, enjoy sweet communion with God, and be prepared for the employments and enjoyments of heaven. And to preach the gospel to any saving effect, these essential duties must be inculcated as necessary to the obtaining of final salvation.

5th. *A state of future rewards and punishment is a doctrine necessary to be announced, in preaching the gospel.*

The gospel does not only abound with truths, precepts, encouragements, and promises; but also with the most solemn warnings and awful sanctions. Hence the ambassadors of Christ do as much preach the gospel, when they declare in the name of their Lord and Master, that he who believeth not shall be damned, as when they proclaim, he that believeth shall be saved. The great end of the gospel, as it respects man, is to save him from endless perdition; and crown him with immortal glory. Then the future torments of the wicked should be fully and clearly enforced, as the terrours of the Almighty, to deter from sin; and the future bliss of the righteous should be set forth to excite to a life of holiness. And whilst ministers of the gospel, on the one hand, do hold forth the words of eternal life; on the other, they should denounce those of eternal death. They are not only to carry messages of love, of grace, and salvation; but to bear the thunders of God's word in condemnation, that if by any means, they may save some. The great judgement day, and the future and eternal scenes beyond the grave, are abundantly and emphatically described and foretold in the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ; and these infinitely important truths must be maintained and announced by the heralds of his cross. Thus I have mentioned some of the important doctrines and duties which are necessary to be unfolded, in the preaching of the gospel.

In the second place, let us notice some of the desirable effects of a stated and faithfully preached gospel.

1st. *A preached gospel is favourable to mental improvement and refinement of manners.* Where the blessings of the gospel do most abound, there the arts and sciences are cultivated and carried to their greatest perfection, which tends greatly to enlarge the views of the mind and refine the social affections. Moreover, the exhibition of the varied truths of the gospel, and their

several relations, tend to diffuse light and useful knowledge, and to promote the various duties of social life. The preaching of the gospel is pointed against the vices of mankind, and is a means of preventing innumerable acts of open vice. The grosser acts of immorality do generally much more abound where a people are destitute of the various means of grace, than where these precious blessings are enjoyed. Moreover, every gospel sermon is calculated to promote the cause of virtue; and where the instruction is stated, simple, and forcible, there we may see a people the most virtuous. The improvement and refinement of the understanding, serve to regulate the outward conduct, and render the conversation and manners of a person not only engaging and pleasing, but worthy of imitation. Even in this point of view, parents and children, the aged and young, the present and the rising generation, are deeply concerned, and should feel a lively interest that they enjoy a stated and faithfully preached gospel, and other means of improvement with which it is connected.

2d. *A preached gospel serves to keep societies in harmony, and greatly to ameliorate the present condition of man.* Where a people are not accustomed to meet on the Sabbath for social and religious worship, coldness of affection, distance of conversation, and disunion of social pursuits, are the general consequence. But, where societies generally assemble on that holy day, and hear divine truths illustrated, and their various moral obligations forcibly inculcated, we may there behold the dearest interests of civil society promoted. The preaching of the gospel is addressed to all the active principles in man, to his hopes and fears; and it teaches him to render custom to whom custom is due; honour, to whom honour is due; hence it has a powerful influence to render subjects obedient. The duties of parents and children, of rulers and ruled, are described in their greatest beauty and harmony, and their mutual benefit made

known. Acts of charity and humanity, of forbearance and forgiveness, are drawn in lively colours, and allure to obedience. But how extensive and varied must be the beneficial tendencies of these duties and relations, which are taught in the gospel without a parallel! How do they prove a bond of union, and the great cement of society! How do they administer succour for the temporal wants of men, relieve the necessities of the distressed, and bear an extensive sway greatly to alleviate the burdens of life, and ameliorate the present condition of man!

3d. *The preaching of the gospel is the great means of the conversion and salvation of those that believe.* The truths of divine revelation serve to enlighten the understandings of men; and divine grace renders them effectual for the renewal of the heart; but these are the most forcibly illustrated by the preaching of the word. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; and the great work of gospel ministers is to exhibit its truths in the clearest and most interesting manner, and not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. And, as they are instrumental in converting sinners and saving their souls from death, says the apostle Paul, It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Moreover, in view of their office, ministration, and success, he adds, We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. And it is a matter of fact, that a preached gospel has proved successful to make the learned and unlearned, wise in Christ; to convert the moralist and profane unto God, and to reclaim the drunkard and profligate to a life of righteousness. It has exchanged heathenish darkness for the light of heaven, and turned gross idolators to the worship of the true God. The little child and the gray-headed sinner, the slave and his master, the beggar and the king, have been saved through its influence. They have obtained life and immortality through the light of a preached gospel.

4th. *The highest joys of holy beings are promoted in consequence of the blessed effects of the preaching of the word.* As the gospel ministry is the great medium of opening the eyes of mankind, and of turning them from darkness to light; and from the power of satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified, so there is joy in heaven among the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth. But, if the conversion of one soul gives additional joy to the glorified spirits above, how will the salvation of the myriads of human beings increase their burning love, and raise still higher their heavenly anthems of praise, and render louder their glorious songs of joy! When all the redeemed, the ransomed of the Lord, shall be brought home to glory, then, with the most intense glows of divine love, and raptures of heavenly bliss, will be given glory to God in the highest, with thanksgivings of eternal hallelujahs. Yes, and unparalleled will be the joys of the redeemed; and they will even outvie the angels in praise:

> Never did angels taste above,
> Redeeming grace and dying love.

As the glorious scheme of redemption through Jesus Christ unfolds peculiar displays of the perfections and glory of God, so it will be the beauty of perfection, and the darling theme of heaven. But, such peculiar glories, through the grace and mercy of God, must be ascribed to the glorious successes and blessed effects of his preached gospel.

We may readily see in the third place, *why it is desirable that the gospel should be preached to every creature, or to the whole human race.* The same arguments which may be adduced to show the goodly effects and vast importance of a preached gospel among ourselves, are reasons which may be assigned with equal force, to prove its utility and necessity as it respects others. Is the gospel the greatest blessing of heaven to those who enjoy all its inestimable

privileges? What a pathetick, and forcible plea, then, that the destitute in our own country, enjoy its enlightening and saving influence. It has been handed down to us from the apostles, by missionaries, and these gospel heralds are going forth into all the world, and flying as the messengers of heaven to every nation upon earth. Give a helping hand then, my brethren, and help some feeble church and scattered people support a gospel minister. Through increasing attention and property, they will shortly erect a house for God: Yea, and even another congregation spring up near them. How desirable that Pagan superstition, the midnight Egyptian darkness of heathenism, and their abominable idolatries, give place to the light and power of the gospel! What a blessed view for angels to see wretched pagans and heathens, from the east and the west, through a preached gospel, become lively stones in the heavenly temple, now erecting on mount Zion, in the new Jerusalem above. O! that those miserable beings enjoyed those civil laws which are framed under the benign and salutary influence of the gospel. Then a man would be permitted to have but one wife; and horribly deluded parents would not put to death their children as the only means of ending their misery. Listen to an anecdote: An aged mother was standing in a school of heathen children, weeping. She was asked by the catechuman, why she was grieved and distressed. O! if you had come here ten years ago, my son had lived, and been one of this school; I should not have put him to death. Ah! my friends, you have Christ and him crucified, preached unto you; and unto them that believe, he is precious. But how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? Bless the Lord, O ye his saints, that he is sending forth labourers into the barren and forlorn parts of his vineyard. Yes, and the varied

means and glorious effects for extending the Redeemer's reign, are but as yet the first beams of the morning sun, compared with the full blaze of noon-day. May we, by our prayers and substance, be awake to the calls and perishing necessities of the destitute at home and abroad. An Owyheean youth, having in this country experienced the joys of believing, was lamenting the death of his aged mother. Being asked if she died happy; No, no, said he, it cannot be; they have no Bibles, no preaching, no heaven, in Owyhee.

IMPROVEMENT.

1st. We may see, *that a faithful gospel minister is a great blessing to a people, and should be accounted as such.* Some of the heralds of the cross are more worthy of esteem than others, according to their talents, their wisdom, and faithfulness. Those of great abilities, natural and acquired, and whose piety and zeal in the cause of Christ are eminent, should be considered among the number of the most worthy. But those who have less splendid attainments, and whose christian walk is worthy of imitation, should be received as precious gifts of heaven. The prospects of gospel ministers depend very much upon the reception which they receive among any people; for their prayers, friendly remarks, and pecuniary aid, are the main-spring of their usefulness. And such supports, by a mutual reciprocity, serve to render their labours a blessing to individuals and families, to parents and children, to schools and societies. Moreover, the establishment of churches and a stated ministration of the word, not only serve to promote the spiritual interest of mankind, but from observation and general facts, their natural tendency and consequence are, to promote their temporal interests, to increase the value of property, and greatly to multiply the means of subsistence. Yes, what is contributed for the support of gospel privileges, is

doubly repaid by a natural and gracious return of earthly blessings. But the highest object of a gospel minister, is to prove a savour of life unto life to the souls of their hearers, and to be the happy instruments of promoting their immortal interests.

2d. We may see, *that the gospel is worthy of all acceptation, of the cordial reception of every creature, or human being to whom it is addressed.* The tree of life grows out of the gospel, and its leaves are for the healing of the nations. It bears twelve manner of fruit, and yields her fruit every month; and thousands of thousand, and ten times thousand, are now participating of its delicious and heavenly repast; and it proffers a rich feast to all the world, though thousands rather starve than come. The river of life flows from the gospel, and all who drink of it, quench their parching, dying thirst. It has healing streams which are flowing to the remotest corners of the earth, that all who wash may be healed of their diseases; yea, and the polluting, incurable leprosy may be cleansed and healed. Eat then, O friends! drink, yea, drink abundantly; and wash at the head fountain of the waters of salvation. The Spirit and the bride, say come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Yes, and beckoning angels at heaven's gates are looking down to see if we will come. Blessed gospel! how worthy of acceptation, which pours joy and consolation into the soul, yields the peace and balm of our mortal life; renders triumphant and victorious in the trying hour of death; and crowns with glorious immortality beyond the grave.

3d. This subject teaches us *not to esteem it a burden to be charitable and to send the gospel to others, but to claim it as our unspeakable privilege*:

> Let sweet charity attend our door,
> And smiling mercy bless the poor.

There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and

there is that withholdeth more than is meet; but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself. Let us take a few examples. Suppose an aged father and mother were bowed down with all the infirmities of old age, tattered with rags, afflicted with rheumatick complaints, and under a shelter which could not secure from the inclemencies of the weather. Suppose they should receive some comfortable clothing and other aids in their necessities. How would their souls daily bless the kind hand of charity! Surely you would say, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Picture to yourselves a family of half famished children surrounding their mother, preparing them victuals from provisions received from some unknown hand. Listen to the simplicity of their inquiries, who was that charity that stopt at our door? Hear their expressions of gratitude and thankfulness. With blushing cheeks and a glowing heart, you would see the propriety of this exhortation, Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. My dear hearers, we live in such plenty, that we know not what it is to want; consequently we are insensible of the blessings of our charity. We know not how much good we do, when we give. Methinks I hear one say, I have no part in this matter; for I never gave for charitable purposes. Open your heart then, reach forth your hands, and reap the reward of the liberal. One evening a missionary, to some heathens soliciting a Bible, promised to give them one next morning. At the break of day, he saw they were laying on the ground, and had endured the dampness and chills of an inclement night. Being asked the reason, their reply was, they feared if they returned home, they should miss of a Bible. Charity once presented a Bible to a woman lately made rich in faith, but miserably poor in the good things of this life. She most thankfully received it, pressed it to her bosom, and exclaimed, Had I ten thousand dol-

lars, and could I not obtain a Bible without them, I would give them all for one. To some the Lord has given ability and opportunity in many ways, to do much for the advancement of his cause; and to others, but little. O may both be enabled at last joyfully to render an account of their stewardship. Have our hearts been chilled with cold infidelity, and the substance which the Lord has lent us to promote his glory, been withheld in time past? May we then now redeem our time, arise and trim our lamps. And may we bear in mind, that the gift of a poor widow's two mites is a sacrifice at which we shall be glad to look, in the great judgement day, when the divine Redeemer shall demand the credentials of our alms-giving, as evidence of our sincerity as his friends. *Amen and Amen.*

SERMON XII.

JOSEPH'S AFFECTION, SEASONABLY MANIFESTED, WORTHY OF IMITATION.

Genesis, xlv. 4.

I am Joseph, your brother.

THE history with which these words are connected, is very curious and interesting; and the instruction which it affords, is manifold and important. Human depravity with some of its basest designs and most unnatural transactions, is delineated; and the nobleness of human uprightness is also recorded. Whilst we behold the varied intentions and schemes of men, we are presented with a wonderful exhibition of the marvelous providence of God, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Let some of the facts with which this subject is connected be noticed; and serve as an introduction to this discourse, for the practical purposes of our social and religious life. The term *Joseph*, is expressive of increase or addition. And when God remembered Rachel, that she bare a son, she called his name Joseph; and said, The Lord shall add to me another son. That son was Benjamin, or son of the right hand. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Joseph and Benjamin were both loved with peculiar affection by their father; for they were the sons of his beloved wife, Rachel. It appears that Joseph was a person of remarkable natural talents, of singular beauty, and piety; and probably these endeared him yet more to his father, who made him a coat of many colours. For this and his dreams, his brethren

hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. This is the relation of the first dream of Joseph to his brethren: Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field and lo, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and behold, your sheaves stood round about and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said unto him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? and they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren: behold the sun and the moon, and the eleven stars, made obeisance to me. And his father rebuked him, and said, Shall I and thy mother, and thy brethren, indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee, to the earth? And his brethren envied him, but his father observed the saying. From the event, it appears that their interrogations were the right interpretation of the dreams, of which they had some apprehension, especially the father. Shortly his brethren devise to slay him. Reuben, in order to save his life, advises to cast him into a pit; but Judah persuaded them to sell him to the Ishmaelites; and they sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. The coat of many colours is dipt in the blood of a kid, and presented to the aged father a sad spectacle. But the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and the Lord made all that he did, to prosper in his hand. He escaped the snare of a treacherous mistress, that he sinned not against his master nor his God, though his innocence was the occasion of his being cast into prison. Now they call upon Joseph to interpret the dream of the chief butler. In his dream there appeared three branches on a vine, which budded, shot forth blossoms, and brought forth clusters of ripe grapes. Says Joseph, The three branches are three days, and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand after the former manner. The chief baker's dream, was three white baskets on his head,

with all manner of bake meats for Pharaoh; but the birds did eat them. The interpretation was, that after three days, he should be hung on a tree. At the end of two full years, Pharaoh had two dreams, or his two-fold dream. The first was the seven well favoured kine, and fat fleshed; and the seven ill-favoured and lean fleshed kine, which eat up the former. The second, was the seven ears of corn on one stalk, rank and good, which were devoured by the seven thin ears, blasted with the east wind. When none of the magicians and wise men of Egypt could interpret this dream for the king, Joseph answered, What God is about to do, he showeth unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty, throughout all the land of Egypt; and there shall arise after them, seven years of famine, which shall consume the land. Now let us notice Joseph's exaltation. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck: and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had. But mark! The famine was sore in all lands, after the expiration of the seven years of plenty. Joseph's brethren must go from the land of Canaan, down to Egypt, to buy corn of him, that they may live and not die. Joseph knew them, but they knew him not. He was only seventeen years of age, when sold into Egypt; and now he is about thirty-eight; an absence of twenty-one years. The scene now changes, and Joseph's dreams begin to be fulfiled. He uses various methods to prove them, to bring them to a proper sense of their own guilt, and to discover how they were affected toward his brother Benjamin. He accosts them as spies; and so orders that they appear to have treated him most ungratefully. They are brought into that situation, that they cannot make it appear but that they have stolen; for the silver

cup is found with them. But Joseph evidently perceived, that confusion and terrour were likely to predominate, and to fill them with apprehension, that he would now avenge the injustice and cruelty of which they appear to have been guilty. When Judah made his pathetick address and affecting plea for the release of Benjamin, Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me: and there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud; and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph: doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you: and they came near; and he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold. The mention of Joseph's name would probably have led his brethren to a recollection of his features and voice; but to remind them of their selling him, would more effectually remove all doubts of his being their brother; and this was necessary to introduce the kind attempt he intended to make, to obviate their fears, and to inspire confidence and comfort. How seasonable, how encouraging and excellent, this simple expression—I am Joseph, your brother! It flowed from a principle of natural affection, from a feeling and generous breast, and from a noble soul, influenced by the principle of true religion. By other persons, or by other means without such an expression of the tongue, this same truth could easily have been made known. If these words were fitly spoken, let them be applied to the practical purposes of life and religion, whilst we notice other relations, times, and circumstances, when similar ones would be seasonable.

1st. *As it respects the various relations of human*

beings, on encouraging conversation and other expressions of the tongue, are very desirable and highly important.

It is a common proverb, that actions speak louder than words. The true import of this expression is, that unless our conduct correspond with our expressions, there is inconsistency and deceit. But let our daily deportment be such as becometh human beings, and then suitable expressions of the tongue are the spring of life. As the term, Joseph, imports increase, or addition, so they will increase human happiness, and do honour to human beings. Let the conjugal relation be first noticed. A man who provides well for his own household and is kind to his wife, may be called a good husband. But, if in addition to these, there daily flow from his tongue an affectionate, instructive, and animating conversation, still more highly favoured must be the companion of his bosom. How much may the trials, cares, and pains of a woman be lessened, her sorrows soothed, and heart cheered, by timely and affectionate expressions. Whilst some are pleased with the simple and frank acknowledgement of a husband's attachment, others are gratified with occasional insinuations, from which the same may be inferred. How many and how varied are the opportunities in the journey of the conjugal life, when a pleasing deportment, kind speech, or consoling word, would greatly increase or promote a woman's happiness. Then let them not be withheld; but in due season administered to divide the sorrows, and double the joys of her life. Let the deportment and conversation of a husband, be such towards his wife in this respect, that he emulate her to repay abundantly the same kindness, by seeking to imitate his excellent example. And surely a faithful and affectionate woman will not be slack to recompense her corresponding obligations. Says Solomon, concerning such an one, She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of

kindness. With the same view he adds, Whoso findeth a wife, findeth a good thing and obtaineth favour of the Lord. And truly a virtuous woman of modest deportment, of chaste and animating conversation, is of much value, and cannot but be prized very highly by every sensible and worthy man. And how most desirable, suitable, and important, is a mutual, reciprocal, and interesting conversation in the conjugal state! The parental relation is an important one in this respect; for much do the comfort, disposition and manners of children depend on the words or addresses of their parents. They are entitled to much encouragement for well doing, and to the most endearing expressions of parental affection. And the tendency is cheerfulness of mind, mental improvement, and religious impressions. In a family circle of brothers and sisters, how suitable and applicable the expression—I am Joseph, your brother. That is, We have the same parent for our father, and I am the same kind and friendly person towards you as when formerly in our father's family. Change and reverse in our circumstances, have not affected me as your enemy. It is proper and suitable, that they who are friends, should manifest themselves as such not only by deeds, but also by words. Some persons have the happy talent by delicate insinuations of such a nature, of gaining the good will of others, and of continuing friendship. Do we esteem such? and shall we not seek to imitate their pleasing and worthy example? How affectionate! what honour has Joseph done himself; what kindness and generosity towards his brethren, in the few words of the text! Then may we in the varied relations and circumstances of life, bear these words and this example in mind; and may our speech be well ordered, and a talent so important be wisely improved.

2d. *We should be careful to observe suitable times and opportunities in order to remind those of their evil, who*

have injured us, or have had evil intentions to do us an injury.

How seasonable, friendly, and faithful the conduct of Joseph, when he says, I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. This expression is well calculated to bring their sin to remembrance, and it was proper they should be thus reproved and humbled. A brother! yet base, treacherous brethren, you sold me, and that into a foreign land. Your conduct was most unnatural and abominable in the sight both of God and man. Manifold are the offences and injuries of this present state. In certain seasons and circumstances to remind others of their faults, would only increase the difficulty. But still, reproof is necessary when wisdom and faithfulness evince the duty. There is a time suitable to rebuke and reprove, as well as to encourage and command. Joseph is now ruler and governour over Egypt, and in the height of prosperity. But no thanks to his brethren, that he is not there a slave, daily groaning under oppressive bondage. He is now a lord, and most highly esteemed of a nation; but they were base enough for ever to have deprived him of liberty and honour. Similar conduct has been manifested amongst mankind in ten thousand instances and ways. How many have used all their subtlety and power in order to injure the person, character, and property of others, against whom they have been opposed, on the account of some unreasonable prejudice? And, if they have not effected their overthrow, or been the instrument of some wide spread and lasting injury, it is not for the want of shameful intentions, nor base exertions. Perhaps they afterwards see a person whose ruin they have sought, very prosperous and much esteemed. If their passions or prejudices shall have subsided, and they have some just sense of their criminality, they doubtless will have views and feelings somewhat similar to those of Joseph's

brethren. But time, place, and circumstances should be observed, would any remind them of their evil conduct, and make them ashamed and penitent for what they have done. If any would reprove others, or tell them of their faults in faithfulness, and for their good, they should seek to do it with a spirit and with wisdom, as Joseph did. Says Solomon, Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. It is very important, that words of reproof be fitly spoken to answer some wise and salutary purpose. With decision, faithfulness, and meekness may we learn to inform our fellow mortals of the errour of their ways.

3d. The history of Joseph will show, *that it is proper for mankind to speak of their prosperity, when they would bring to view the goodness of God, or console their fellow mortals.* When, through the smiles of Providence, any have attained the varied blessings of life, it is proper, at certain times, for them to mention to their friends, how the Lord has prospered them. It is neither for the benefit, nor is it the duty of man to be always speaking of his misfortunes. Prosperity has a claim to a portion of his words, as well as adversity. To be frequently mourning or repining at the allotments of Providence as is the manner of some, is certainly sinful. And a person may speak of his enjoyments and success, in the language of boasting instead of gratitude and thankfulness. To show the vanity and impiety of such conversation, let us notice the expressions, and from these, view the spirit of the king of Babylon, who is called Nebuchadnezzar. As he was walking in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon, The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honour of my majesty? From such an air, views, and language every sensible and pious man cannot but wish to be delivered. The spirit and manner of Joseph will appear a most beautiful con-

trast. Whilst he mentions his prosperity and honour, meekness and gratitude are apparent. The goodness of God and the consolation of his afflicted father, are most conspicuous in the words of his speech. To his troubled brethren he says, God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you, that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and Lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, and tarry not. How do humility, humanity, and a sense of entire dependance on God for all the blessings of life, shine forth in this address! Joseph was indeed highly exalted, but his heart was not lifted up with pride in the height of his prosperity. Let his example then be proposed for imitation. When abounding in the good things of life, let the manner and history of Joseph have their proper influence.

4th. *The history of Joseph and his brethren, is calculated to give us some proper views of the important duty of forgiveness.* Joseph was of a forgiving spirit, and when he had sufficiently tried and proved them, he was ready for a reconciliation. He had recourse to various expedients in order to bring them to a sense of their wickedness, to humble them, and excite repentance for their sin, before that he expressed forgiveness. He possessed a forgiving temper, during the whole course of trial, but, before he would exclaim, I am Joseph your brother, he must have evidence of their compunction and abasement. When he saw that they were sufficiently humbled, and about to be overwhelmed with grief on the account of their aggravated sin, he addresses them with words of consolation. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life. The conduct of

Joseph towards his brethren, in this respect, is god-like, and an excellent pattern for our imitation. The Lord is a gracious and merciful God, abundant in compassion; but he never has, and never will pardon any who have rebelled against him, before they are brought to true, evangelical repentance. In like manner is the duty of forgiveness inculcated upon mankind abundantly in the holy scriptures. If others have trespassed against us, and they confess their faults, or exhibit evidence of genuine repentance, they are to be forgiven. Even against our enemies we are not to cherish a spirit of enmity and revenge, but a friendly and forgiving spirit. Some injuries do, indeed, demand reparation; but where true penitence is, there is also always a disposition, to make restitution. Even the sacred volume does not demand the expression of forgiveness, till there is confession of fault, or a manifestation of sorrow for the wrong. When we are required to forgive our enemies, the true import is, that we should exercise a forgiving and not revengeful disposition; that if they exhibit repentance, we should put forth the act of forgiveness. As we would hope to obtain the pardon of our sins from God, when we confess and forsake them, so we should be ready to do towards our enemies; and more than this, certainly is not required. The Lord is pleased to see penitent, returning prodigals, and such only does he forgive. So we should heartily desire to have our enemies, even those who have greatly injured us, become at peace, be reconciled; and when they manifest a spirit of penitence, we should manifest the spirit of the gospel, a spirit of forgiveness.

5th. *This subject is calculated to give us clear and striking views of the perfect righteousness and adorable mercy of God.* Whatever excellent or amiable natural talents any possess, they must be born again or they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. However engaging or pleasing the manners of any may be in

the view of men, without that repentance which is unto life, they must perish. On the other hand, if sin shall have polluted the soul like that of Manasseh, or Mary Magdalene, and it be created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, it will triumph with seraphs in eternal life. Neither the number nor magnitude of our sins will exclude us from immortal bliss, if we have repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Through the adoring grace and mercy of God, by godly sorrow and repentance unto salvation, some of the greatest sinners and vilest wretches that have ever lived, have been received to mansions above, to sing for ever the glorious songs of redeeming love. Unless the heart be renewed by grace, there can be no qualifications to prepare for heaven. But to every penitent, believing soul, the language of its Maker is, I am thy reconciled God, thine everlasting inheritance, and eternal, glorious recompense of reward. *Amen.*

SERMON XIII.

A VAIN CURIOSITY REPROVED.

John, xxi. 22.

What is that to thee? follow thou me.

THE directions of the word of God are as varied as the circumstances of man require. They are suited to his fallen state; and calculated to lead him in the pathway of life. The blessed Saviour was ever ready to give salutary counsel; and his instructions discover superiour excellence, because they were so wisely and timely given. He who spake as never man spake, on every occasion was faithful, and would direct the attention and pursuit of man to his dearest interest for time and for eternity. No favourable opportunity was unimproved, nor seasonable instruction withheld. His words were ever fitly spoken, whether of compassion or severity; of encouragement or rebuke. After having put the question to Peter three different times, Lovest thou me, he adds, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself and walkest whither thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following, which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is

that to thee? follow thou me. Peter had earnestly professed his readiness to die with Christ; yet when put to the trial, he shamefully failed him. But our Lord next assured him that he would at length be called on, and enabled to perform that engagement. In his youth he had been used to gird himself, and to walk at liberty as he pleased. But in his old age, he would be required to stretch out his hands, that others might bind him and carry him to endure those sufferings at which nature would be reluctant. This signified the death by which he would glorify God, as a martyr for the truth. Jesus next called upon him to signify his readiness to adhere to his cause, even unto death, by rising up and following him; with which Peter complied without hesitation. But turning about, he saw John also, without any command, showing the same willingness to suffer death for the sake, and after the example of his beloved Lord. This led Peter to inquire, What he was to do; Was he also to be a martyr? To this our Lord replied, That if it were his will he should abide on earth till his coming, that was no concern of Peter's, who ought not to indulge a vain curiosity, but to follow him. This would be a token and evidence of his readiness to adhere to his instructions, to obey his commandments, to copy his example, and to suffer for his sake.

This illustration of the inquiry of Peter, and the answer of the Saviour, may lead us to see, *that mankind are apt to inquire into those things in which they are not immediately concerned, rather than into those in which they are most deeply interested.* Some particular subjects of inquiry of this kind, will be noticed and illustrated.

1st. As it respects the common affairs of life, some discover a fondness and inquisitiveness to become acquainted with the concerns of others, to which they are neither called by duty nor interest. Mankind may with propriety inquire into the situation of

their neighbours, as it respects either their prosperity or adversity. But they should be careful to possess a right spirit and intention, when such inquiries are made. Would they learn the welfare of others to rejoice with them, and not for envy, they do well. Would they inquire into their distresses and misfortunes, in order to sympathize with them and afford relief, instead of rejoicing in their calamities, their conduct would be truly becoming and commendable. Objects of distress and charity are to be sought out, that the balm of consolation may be administered to their minds, and the hand of plenty reached forth to supply their wants. Inquiries of such a nature are truly laudable, and have the approbation and blessing of heaven. In the varied pursuits and transactions of life, would any wish to know the concerns or state of others in order to benefit them, the direction of the Saviour, Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others, secures from censure, and commends. But when any would pry into the affairs and concerns of others, and would indulge a vain curiosity to become more acquainted with their circumstances than their own, the words of the text should be applied: What is that to thee? follow thou me. Rather let such, more carefully mind their own business, and meddle less by their inquisitiveness into the prospects of others. Happy would it indeed be, if none merited a more severe rebuke. Some discover a restlessness to pry into the secrets, and learn the disappointments of others, in order to spread them abroad and do an injury. Hence, not only a propensity for curiosity, but a malignant disposition is manifest. Some are ever ready to hear of the failings of others, not to weep for their sins in secret, but to make them publick. This is frequently done by persons who themselves can derive no benefit, nor be serviceable to community. And we are even taught in the sacred oracles, that some are forward to pull out a mote from

their brother's eye, when they have a beam in their own eye. But such persons do well to bear in mind the reply, Physician, heal thyself. Charity should begin at home, as it respects secular concerns, in ordering the common affairs of life. Let individuals thoroughly understand and regulate their varied temporal pursuits, and the concerns of community will be well. Let them discharge the various duties which they owe to themselves and others, rather than to be over anxious to know the particulars or peculiarities of their fellow men. Let each one feel interested to attend to his own calling as it respects the pursuits of common life, and this will serve to check a fondness and inquisitiveness to become acquainted minutely with the concerns of others, to which we can neither be called from duty nor from interest.

2d. Some persons discover a vain curiosity in discoursing on the entrance of sin into the world. Such an inquiry may be properly made; as it is a subject of vast importance, and in which we are interested. But divine revelation must be taken for our light, and circumscribe our inquiries. Now the sacred oracles inform us, that through the temptation of the serpent, our first parents violated the positive command of God, fell from their holy state, into a state of sin and condemnation; and that in consequence of their transgression, all their posterity become sinners. And without the Bible for our guide, when and how sin entered the world, we could not certainly know. But the curious minded, press the inquiry farther. Did the Lord bring about the fall of man himself? Or did he only give permission? Or why, that is, what are the reasons that sin was permitted to enter, if he could have prevented it by his power? What is that to thee, vain man? If neither reason nor revelation can answer our inquiries, shall we seek to be wise above what is written? The things which are revealed on this subject belong to us, and should

bound our inquiries; for secret things belong to God. Because the Lord has not revealed all the reasons, or given all the information which he might have done concerning the entrance of sin into the world, must his infinite wisdom be arraigned before the tribunal of human wisdom? As it is a solemn and alarming fact, that we are sinners against a holy and just God, rather let us seek to be delivered from the dominion and wages of sin. The inquisitive and vain search, for the manner of the entrance of sin, little concerns us; but how we shall be delivered from its pollution as a deadly leprosy of the soul, is an inquiry of the utmost importance.

Take an example for illustration. Suppose a man to be roused from his midnight slumbers by the noise of a thief plundering his house. He hears him pillaging his coffers of his only treasure, which, if carried off, must render him bankrupt, and reduce his family to poverty. But he searches his house with the utmost diligence from top to bottom, to find the place of the thief's entrance, instead of securing him; and meanwhile he makes his escape. Alas! poor man! for his folly he is ruined. Had he acted with wisdom, he would first have secured his treasure. Then may we not indulge a vain curiosity respecting the entrance of sin into the world; or be anxious to know those reasons, which are hid in the divine mind; for we are apt to inquire into those things, in which we are not immediately concerned, rather than into those, in which we are most deeply interested.

3d. Some persons entertain singular ideas, and make curious inquiries concerning Melchisedek. They have a right to be informed concerning him; but they should be content, when they have all the instruction which can be given. The sacred historians give no account of his parentage or pedigree, as in the case of the priests appointed by the law, and who were all required to prove their descent

from Aaron. Hence he is represented to be Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually. Melchisedek is introduced into the sacred history, as a priest of the most high God, without father, mother, or genealogy, that he might the more exactly typify that high priest, who, as the Son of man, had no earthly father: and as the Son of God, was without mother, and who was appointed to the priesthood, without deducing his pedigree from Aaron. Nothing is said of Melchisedek respecting the beginning of his life, or the end of his days and priesthood, that he might be a type of the Son of God, whose existence is from eternity to eternity, and who had no predecessor or successor in his meritorious and perpetual priesthood. In all these respects, the silence of the scriptures doubtless is intentional; and refers from the type to the great Antitype, who once offered himself a sacrifice for sin, and ever liveth to make intercession for the saints. Now if any person has not all the information their curiosity would demand concerning Melchisedek, they may reflect for their comfort, that they are not very deeply interested in the subject. Their serious and devout inquiry should be to form clear and exalted views of the person and offices of Christ, and to follow him. His character and priesthood are abundantly and clearly made known. He is the foundation of the gospel, and of all our hopes of future bliss. He is the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. To believe in him, is life; but, to deny him, is death. In his divinity and humanity, his life and death, we are immediately concerned. His holy life should be kept in our minds as the perfect pattern of imitation. How conspicuous are his zeal and perseverance in doing his Father's will; and with what lustre do his patience and meekness shine. Let it be our inquiry then to form exalted and adoring views

of his divine character, and to follow him in his imitable examples of perfect obedience. They that exalt him, will be exalted; but they who refuse to have him reign over them, will be confounded. Whilst all the angels of God worship him, may it ever be our chief study, to know, to love, and serve him.

4th. Some persons are fond of proposing queries concerning the state and condition of the Heathen world, who appear to have but little concern or anxiety for themselves as sinners, and exposed to destruction. But this is certain, that they, who do not feel deeply interested for their own salvation, cannot have much concern or regard for the salvation of others. Hence cavils arise, Why the Lord did not, even by miracles, have the gospel preached to all nations? or why are so many of the human race left in Heathenish darkness? But they, who thus cavil, do not daily address the throne of divine grace in their behalf; and perhaps they have never contributed one cent to assist, in sending the gospel to them. Now what profit can there be in such queries? If any feel interested for the welfare of Heathenish nations, let their prayers and alms ascend up as a memorial before God, that the Sun of righteousness may arise and shine into those dark and benighted corners of the earth. Whatever conjectures any may form concerning their condition and prospects, they can be of no avail, unless they influence to exertion to send them the gospel means of salvation. The first and immediate concern of those in gospel lands should be to embrace and profess the gospel; for then they may feel deeply interested that others also enjoy its inestimable blessings. And this thought should deeply affect the minds of those who cavil, that if those who enjoy the meridian of gospel light, are not saved through its influence, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, and the nations of the Heathen, in the day of judgement, than for them. How inconsistent is the conduct of those

who do not wisely improve, but abuse their own exalted religious privileges, that they be often proposing queries about the state of those who are not thus highly axalted. They who are destitute of the light of the gospel, do need the pity of those who live in gospel lands; yea, they are in perishing need of gospel light and means. But let us be merciful to our own selves; let our own hearts be imbued and influenced by the benevolent spirit of the gospel; and then our cavils will be turned into the most solemn inquiries, how we shall reach forth to them the word of God, and be the happy agents of sending the bread of life. Whilst we weep for ourselves and those around us, let our queries be turned into fervent prayers; and our idle wishes, into acts of charity, for the destitute and wretched Pagans. Then may we hope, that they will participate in like glorious privileges and blessings with us. Yea, we may see some, who, in the last great day, will rise up as saved through our exertions, and call us blessed.

5th. Some persons are apt to inquire concerning the future condition of infants, whether they are all to be saved or not. But this is a subject, in which they are not immediately and deeply interested; for all they can do, is to commend them to the grace of God, and implore his blessing. They may propose many queries, and indulge in trifling speculations; but to what profit? If the lives of infants be spared, they, who have the care of them, may bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, at a very early age. For this duty and privilege they should feel a deep and lively interest. We may converse and receive instruction concerning the state and condition of infants, if we take the scriptures for our guide. But skeptical disputes and angry contentions concerning them, are injurious and to be avoided. The inquiry may be, Are infants born in a state of perfect holiness? I answer, no. For David says, concerning himself, Behold, I was shapen in

iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. And from inspiration we are taught, That all are estranged from their birth. The scriptures no where teach us, that mankind by nature are holy, but sinful. But are all who die in infancy, through the grace of God and the atonement, to be saved? Whether the word of God is sufficiently full and decided on this point as to furnish a positive answer, I cannot tell. But suppose it is not? What is that to thee? They very fully teach parents their personal duties, and those which they owe their tender offspring, which is all that immediately and deeply concerns them. But how foolish and inconsistent to hear parents engage in warm disputes and bitter contentions respecting the condition of infants, who, instead of teaching their children of understanding, the ways of godliness, by their examples, are leading them in the ways of ungodliness and perdition. Such are more concerned for queries and disputes, than for the dearest interests of their children. Their inquiries are into those things in which they are not immediately concerned, rather than into those in which they and their offspring are most deeply interested.

6th. The inquiry is frequently made, *whether the greater part of the human race will be saved or lost?* A certain one asked the Saviour, Are there few that be saved? And he said, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. The man does not appear to have had any ill design, although he proposed a curious question. Our Lord, therefore, did not give him a direct answer; but took occasion to inculcate this important exhortation, that mankind should not be solicitous to know how many will be saved, but to secure their own salvation. In the thousand years of the millennium, doubtless the chief part will be saved. But in that period, a far greater number will people the globe, than all who shall have existed before. The consequence must be, that a far greater

number of human beings will finally be saved than lost.

7th. Another inquiry is often made, *in what part of the universe are heaven and hell?* Some conjecture, that one of the planets or fixed stars is the place of the blessed; others, that it is far beyond the starry heavens, and that this earth will be the final abode of the wicked. But to every query of such a nature, the proper answer is, What is that to thee? The Lord has not revealed this, and we are not immediately concerned to know, where is the place of final destiny either for the righteous or wicked. The doctrine of future rewards and punishments is fully made known, and we are deeply interested in these solemn truths. Then our serious inquiry should be, to know how we may avoid the second death, and inherit eternal life. It is of the utmost importance for us, to be delivered from the bondage of sin and death, and to obtain that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. To follow Christ is both our duty and our immortal interest. There is such a place as heaven, and also a hell. To be an inhabitant of the former, will be infinite gain; but of the latter, infinite loss. Where these places are, availeth not; but to know what manner of spirit we possess, is to foresee our eternal doom. In the word of God we may behold, as in a glass, our own character as saints or sinners; and discover our future glorious recompense, or dread inheritance. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear, from the several views which we have taken of this subject, What is that to thee? follow thou me.

REFLECTIONS.

1st. From this subject we may conclude, *discourses of a novel nature are calculated to please some, although they may not feel deeply interested.* A spirit for novelty is in some degree common to all men; and to some, peculiarly so. Such, like the Athenians, would spend

their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing. And should such be gratified, their imaginations would be entertained, but their understandings would not be edified with the most solemn and important truths. To grow in knowledge, seems to be natural to the mind of man. But he should be careful not to indulge a vain curiosity for mere novelty; but to add to his stock of knowledge, by treasuring up new ideas from the many varied and interesting truths, which relate to present usefulness, and future felicity. The field is so vast from the works, the word, and providence of God, that we may ever be improving in the knowledge of those things, which are suited to the dignity of rational and immortal beings. New and interesting scenes and events will ever be before us, and we shall never be circumscribed for the want of proper objects to excite our wonder and admiration. Then may a taste for novelty be in subordination, and the queries of a lively imagination in subjection to the nobler powers of reason and understanding, that our inquiries and improvements may be suited to the dignity of our nature and high responsibility.

2d. Then may we search the scriptures, and grow in the knowledge of those things, which the Lord has abundantly and clearly revealed. Whilst in the pursuit of any other knowledge to the neglect of this, we are only catching at shadows, but loose the substance. We are not made merely to amuse ourselves, but to grow wise for eternity. Every doctrine or truth, contained in the sacred pages, and which is peculiar to revelation, is new. None of the human race could ever have discovered them, had they not been blessed with a divine revelation. The particular account of creation and the fall of man, the work of redemption and way of salvation through Jesus Christ, are peculiarities of revelation. Hidden beauties, new and rising wonders, are concealed from the view of many of the curious between the lids

of the Bible, because they do not make the word of life the man of their counsel. How various and interesting are the subjects of divine revelation of things both new and old, of those which are past, and which are yet to come. The account of the conduct, condition, and designs of those invisible spirits, the holy and sinning angels, should most seriously affect us; for like them, and even with them, we are deeply interested. O the wonders, the beauties, and glories of the person, character, and offices of the Redeemer, the only Mediator between God and man! How sublime, and amazingly momentous the description of the general resurrection and great judgement day. In the word of God we have an interest vast as eternity; and to have a saving knowledge of its sacred truths, is to be an heir of immortal glory. *Amen.*

SERMON XIV.

ZION'S TRIALS AND PROSPECTS.

Psalm xlviii. 12.

Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof.

TO hear of glorious achievements and important events, interests the mind of a human being. Many of the concerns pertaining to the human race, are in themselves of vast magnitude; and others become momentously interesting by their connexion with other beings, and their bearing on another world. Ancient and modern history is worthy the study and attention of man; both as it respects the rise and fall of nations, and individuals. The account of worthy heroes and interesting kingdoms, is calculated to please and elevate the human mind. Let us take a glance of two persons of rank, and notice some of the changes which they experienced.

In the year 1774, in which the Marquis de La Fayette was married, his estates are said to have been so great that his annual income amounted to ten thousand one hundred dollars. In the year 1776, he espoused the cause of America; as his mind, naturally elevated, was ever devoted to the cause of liberty. Though France little expected that the American colonies could maintain their declaration of Independence, he was willing to purchase and fit out a vessel at his own expense. He soon landed at Charleston, South-Carolina, where he presented General Moultrie with clothing, arms, and accoutrements for one hundred of his men, who were miserably clad. Being appointed by Congress to the rank and commission

of Major-General in the army of the United States, he was permitted to take the command of two thousand young men, who being regularly disciplined, became the flower of the American army. They were equipped throughout at his own expense; and for his bravery, military skill, and successes, he had the confidence of his men, of Washington, and Congress. Being highly honoured, and having returned home in the time of the French revolution, he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the national guards, and commander of all the militia in France. But shortly he is accused, and a price set on his head. He escapes from the army, and after many most degrading reproaches and insults, at last is delivered up to the Austrian government, and confined in one of the cells of the prison at Olmutz. The sufferings of La Fayette in this dreary abode, brought him to the borders of the grave. His confinement was five years; that of his wife and daughters, twenty-two months. If all the circumstances attending his imprisonment should be taken into consideration, a parallel case of injustice and cruelty could scarcely be found in the annals of history. Now let us turn our thoughts to his arrival and reception at New-York, in the year 1824: Let us only contemplate his tour through the United States, and hint at the honours which he received from this nation; then enough will be told of him.

Again: In the year 1774, Louis XVI, ascends the throne of France. But, in a few years, the condition of the nation is so alarming, that the royal family are obliged to escape from Paris. They are taken and brought back, and suffer the most inhuman treatment. The king and royal family are imprisoned, accused, condemned, and executed. In the time of their arrest and confinement, they experienced the most cruel abuse. Their horrid execution is too affecting and shocking at this time to be related. What contrasts in the condition of Louis XVI. king

of France! Thus a cursory view of two personages has been taken, to show that not only the history of nations, but that of individuals, is often important and interesting.

Still there is a history vastly more important, and infinitely more interesting. This is the history of the church, or a description of the trials and prosperity of Zion. Her king is the Lord of hosts; her dominion is an everlasting dominion; and all her subjects shall finally wear crowns of glory for ever and ever. Her chief tower is heaven; and all the angels of God are her guards. She is styled the perfection of beauty; for in her militant state, her subjects are the peculiar chosen people of her King; and in her triumphant state, they are the citizens of the new Jerusalem above. Well, then, may the Psalmist exclaim, Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof.

In the early ages of the world, there were preachers of righteousness, among whom Noah was distinguished. But religious instructers were chiefly Patriarchal, till the time of Moses. Then the Levites were the priests for the Jewish nation. Whilst Jerusalem was in splendour, the people were called upon to go round the city in solemn procession; and, while they joyfully praised and blessed the Lord, to mark all the towers, walls, and palaces, observing that not one of them had been in the least injured by her formidable invaders. This would tend the more deeply to impress their minds, and prepare them faithfully and diligently to preserve the memory of these interesting events, for the benefit of future generations.

But says Solomon, The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe. Before the advent of the Saviour, the Lord had not only a seed to serve him, but there were eminent patriarchs and prophets, who were Zion's watchmen; and even the angels were her messengers and warriours.

Their tents were pitched in the midst of her; and frequently they fought her battles, and led her on victorious. But this subject will be chiefly confined to events which have transpired in the church, since the days of Christ and his apostles.

The darkest season was chosen for the appearance of the Son of God, the light and life of the world. The New Testament makes known the out pourings of the Holy Spirit, the persecutions and success of the church, during the first century. In the reign of Trajan, Ignatius was an important pillar in the church. Much did he encourage and strengthen christians, who were persecuted in diverse places. Polycarp was a bold champion for the defence of truth in his life; and his martyrdom was a bulwark for the support and propagation of Christianity. In his days, the holy martyrs sustained the most dreadful tortures for their faith in Christ; evincing indeed, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory, that shall be revealed in them. The name of Cyprian is distinguished in church history. He was a faithful servant of his Lord and master; and an ornament to the church. In Asia, one Maximus was brought before Optimus the proconsul, who inquired after his condition. I was born free, says he, but I am the servant of Jesus Christ. Are you a christian? Though a sinner, yet I am a christian. After persuasions and tortures, he was ordered to be stoned to death. Whilst the persecution was raging with unremitting fury, Cyprian thus addresses the faithful: Heavenly things now succeed earthly; great things, small; and eternal, those that are fading. After a variety of exercises and toils amongst friends and open enemies, by having his head severed from his body by a sword, rested at length in Jesus the magnanimous and benevolent spirit of Cyprian of Carthage.

In the fourth century in the persecution under Dioclesian, edicts were published, by which men of the

Christian religion, of whatever rank or degree, were deprived of all honour and dignity, and exposed to torture. Churches were ordered to be levelled with the ground; and the sacred books to be consumed by fire. Persons of dignity were to be disgraced and the common people to be made slaves, if they persisted in Christianity. Almost systematick and laboured effort was made to extinguish the gospel of Christ. Theodosia, a Tyrian virgin of eighteen years of age, was put to death for owning and countenancing some Christian prisoners. Another, named Ennathas, was dragged by violence to the judge, whipped, and burnt to death. For eight years, both in the east and west, the keenest malice was exerted in this terrible and bloody persecution.

Respecting Constantine, he was an Emperour full of zeal for the propagation of the only divine religion. By his edicts he restores every thing to the church, of which it had been deprived; indemnifies those who had suffered; honours pastors; and recommends to governours of provinces, to promote the gospel. Notwithstanding, he was opposed by men of power and influence, who were corrupt in doctrine and immoral in their lives. In this and succeeding ages, ecclesiastical councils and synods were assembled in order to determine what is sound doctrine, in opposition to heresy.

In the reign of Thrasamond, two hundred and twenty bishops were sent into exile. From this circumstance we may see, that the persecution must have been extensive.

The ninth century is considered as belonging to what is called the dark ages. For several centuries, the proper description is a land of drought and of the shadow of death. Here and there, indeed a glimmering ray of the Sun of Righteousness appears; but it is in vain to look for any steady lustre of evangelical truth and holiness. The tenth century is considered as remarkable above all others for the

scarcity of writers, and men of learning and eminent piety. Opposition began to be made by a few, to the corruptions and abominations in the church of Rome. Church history is perhaps the least interesting at this period.

The thirteenth century may be considered as the dawning of the reformation. Claudius, of Turin, may be accounted as the first real, protestant character; and may be considered as a blessing to the church and to mankind. The name of Wickliff is dear to every enlightened zealous christian: as he so vehemently opposed the whole doctrine of Popish indulgencies. At this period the Lollards endured distressing sufferings. The story concerning John Brown, is worthy of notice. He was brought to Ashford and confined in the stocks, towards evening. One of his female domesticks happened to become acquainted with his situation, and instantly carried home to her mistress the afflicting news. His mournful wife came and sat near him all the night, and heard him relate the melancholy facts of all that had happened to him. His treatment had been barbarous in the extreme. His feet had been placed upon hot burning coals, and kept there till they were burnt to the bones. Notwithstanding, Brown would not deny the faith; but patiently endured the pain, fighting manfully the good fight. To his wife he then said, They have burnt my feet till I cannot set them on the ground; they have done so to make me deny my Lord; but, I thank God they will never be able to make me do that. If I should deny him here, he would deny me hereafter. Therefore, I pray thee, continue as thou hast begun, and bring up thy children in the fear of God. Thy husband is to be consumed at the stake to-morrow. When expiring, he lifted up his hands, and uttered the most fervent prayers; particularly the words of the Psalmist, Into thy hands, I commend my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth. How must the mind of

that disconsolate woman have been encouraged and consoled by such a departure! In the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Lord raised up for his people a son of thunder, who dared oppose Papal indulgences, and preach the truth as it is in Jesus. This was Luther, the celebrated reformer; whose soul was constantly panting for something very different from secular glory. He was of a penetrating mind, naturally eloquent; and became the wonder of his age. He bid the anathema of Popes, and the decrees of councils, defiance, when opposed to the doctrines and spirit of the gospel. What a luminary in the church, this protestant hero! But the glory of Zion will appear the more conspicuous, and her triumph the most complete, if we take a summary view of her persecutions. These are generally considered ten, by the heathen. The first was under the emperour Nero, thirty-one years after our Lord's ascension. Christians were apprehended, and their tortures and death were aggravated by cruel derision and sport. In the year 95, under Domitian, forty thousand were supposed to have suffered martyrdom. Under Trajan, in the year 100, a persecution was carried on for several years with great violence. The fourth, was under Antonius, when Christians were banished from their houses, plundered, imprisoned, and stoned. The fifth, began in the year 127, under Severus, when great cruelties were committed The sixth, began with the reign of Maximinus, in the year 235. The seventh, under the emperour Decius, in the year 250, was more dreadful than any of the former. The Christians were driven from their habitations, stripped of their estates, tormented with racks, and destroyed by every kind of ignominious death. In the eighth, under Valerian, 257, both men and women suffered death, some by scourging, some by the sword, and others by fire. The ninth, was under Aurelian, in 274. The tenth began in the year 303, in the reign of Dioclesian. In this dread-

ful persecution, which lasted ten years, houses filled with Christians were set on fire, and many were tied with ropes, and thrown into the sea. It is related, that seventeen thousand were slain in one month's time. In Holland, fifty thousand are said to have suffered death by the hand of the executioner. But no country, perhaps, has produced more martyrs for the truth than France. More than thirty thousand protestants were destroyed in one massacre. England, Scotland, Ireland, and Spain were also subject to the most dreadful persecutions. But blessed in the eyes of the Lord, is the death of his saints. Yes, and blessed is Zion in the midst of her trials and sufferings. The very means which her enemies used for her overthrow, were overruled for the enlargement of her borders.

Various and glorious are the considerations which might be presented respecting Zion, that her friends may take courage and rejoice.

1st. Her King is the Lord of glory, who possesses all possible perfection. He views her as the apple of his eye; and he is able, and will make all things work together for her good. He will make the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath will he restrain. He will suffer no evil to befal Zion, that one of her subjects shall finally be overcome; or that all shall not eventually triumph gloriously. He will deliver her from all her enemies, external and internal; and exalt her far above their heads. Her people shall be his people, and he will be their God. He hath wisdom and goodness infinite; and his arm is omnipotent. Who can compare with him? Have some of the kings and princes of the earth, been worthy of loyal subjects? Still, all glory is due to Zion's King; whose sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness, and his kingdom and dominion eternal.

2d. *Let us take a view of Zion, respecting her prosperity and prospects in this world.* In the sixteenth century was the glorious reformation in the church; and

the light and power of the gospel overcame persecution, and the combined forces of wicked men and devils. The machinations of secular priests, of Popes and Emperours, to quench and prevent the light and spread of the gospel, were defeated and rendered abortive. The extensive and glorious revivals in the last and present century, are but a few feeble rays for ushering in the millennial day. The whole world must ere long be the kingdom of Christ; and when every part shall be peopled and prosperous, what a vast multitude of subjects! The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ. As manifold as shall be the nations, kindreds, and tongues under the whole heaven, so vast will be the inheritance of Zion. But what great and glorious conquests yet to be achieved! How will she go on conquering and to conquer, and render her captives loyal subjects. Her victories will not only be glorious achievments; but the earth itself will be blessed, when peopled throughout by the righteous. Could we walk about Zion, and go round about her, so as to tell the towers thereof, what blessed wonders should we tell.

3d. The weapons, with which Zion subdues her enemies, are essentially different from those which are formed against her. They are not instruments of death, but of life and peace. Says the Apostle Paul to his brethren, The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. This is a warfare and conquest for the honour and immortality both of the conquerour and conquered. How different in its nature and effects from the contests and conquests of her enemies! The same Apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians says, We wrestle not against flesh and

blood; but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. But this is the proper way, to promote individual and general good. And for the enemies of Zion to be conquered, and to throw down their weapons of rebellion, is the only possible way to be blessed. Their submission is a victory more glorious than ever was obtained by all the legions of earth. As he that is a servant of Christ is free, and is brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; so the subjects of Zion and all her captives, have their names enrolled in the Lamb's book of life.

4th. Many and greatly varied are the excellent things, which may be said concerning Zion. Abraham and Moses, Jeremiah and David, John and Paul, Edwards and Whitfield, and thousands of other heaven-born souls, and sons of God, were worthies, who will compare with, and outshine all the kings and nobles of this world. Such were glorious minds, shining brightly in their heavenly armour. The graces of Christian meekness and humility, and of prayer in faith, ascend and tower up to the heavens, and draw down blessings on churches and the world, to strengthen, beautify, and enlarge the borders of Zion. The holy angels of God, when need requires, sally out of their spacious, lofty tower, for her defence and protection, and for the dismay and destruction of her enemies. They are guards, who keep a constant watch by day and by night; and never did one of them desert to the enemy, or fall asleep on his post. They fore-warn the people of Zion of danger; rescue them from threatening ruin; and when any become martyrs for the faith, they give their souls a glorious escort to Abraham's bosom. Think of Lot, Moses, and Lazarus. The prayers of the saints, through the grace of God, will not only avail much, and be as shields to ward off the weapons of

the enemy; but legions of heavenly warriours are her champions. What is yet accomplished, is but the beginning of what is yet to be done.

5th. We may see, *that Zion is safe in the midst of dangers.* No martyr for the truth was ever safer, than when in the midst of flames. Daniel was safe in the lion's den; so were Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego, when cast into the fiery furnace. Equally secure, and in the hands of the same God, were all those who counted not their lives dear, though suffering unto death. The powers of earth and of hell, with all their cunning and malice, cannot pluck a soldier of the cross out of the Father's hand. None will be lost but the sons of perdition, the enemies of Zion. Whether a church be small, or a believer vexed by the devil; all is well, for thy God, O Zion, reigneth; and all his people shall reign with him, and be kings and priests unto him for ever. But happy is that people, whose God is the Lord; for he has them engraven on the palms of his hands. All the redeemed, the ransomed of the Lord, shall be brought home to glory with songs of joy, and shouts of victory; and shall walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, the mount Zion above. Yet a little while, and all their trials will be turned to glorious rewards; and for self denial they will have crowns of rejoicing. By obedience and sufferings they are most effectually prepared for their eternal, blessed inheritance. Saints, thy God Jehovah, hath you secure in the hollow of his hand, in time; and will have you encircled in the bosom of his love in eternity, to whom be glory for ever more. *Amen.*

SERMON XV.

ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN NAME, AND SUCCESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

Acts xi. 26.

The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

DISCIPLE is a word nearly synonimous in its import with the term, scholar. Or, a disciple is one who attends the lectures, and professes the tenets of another. A disciple of Christ, is one who believes his doctrines, imbibes his Spirit, and follows his example. The disciples, or followers of Christ, were first denominated Christians at Antioch, in Syria, in the forty-second year of the Christian era. This was once considered the third city in the world; famous for its beauty, greatness, and population. It was built by Antiochus and Seleucius Nicanor, partly on a hill, and partly on a plain. It has the river Orontes in its neighbourhood, with a celebrated grove, called Daphne; whence, to distinguish it from other cities of the same name, it has been called Antiochia, near Daphne. The enemies of the disciples of Christ had used the epithets, Nazarene and Galilean, by way of reproach; and hence some are ready to conclude, they invented the term Christian, as an opprobrious name. But, to me this seems improbable, as they were unwilling to allow that Jesus was the Christ, or the Messiah. The original seems to imply, that the name of Christians was given to the disciples by a divine monition. Doubtless it was afterwards used as a term of reproach by their persecutors, though it was honourable in its meaning and original. In the apostolical age, this epithet

aptly denoted the reliance of the saints on that anointed Prince and Saviour, who was generally rejected with disdain by Jews and Gentiles. It also implied, that they also were partakers of an unction or anointing by the Holy Spirit. In the present age it is so promiscuously applied to a vast multitude, that it scarcely implies either honour or reproach. They who seriously profess to believe in Christ and obey him, are generally distinguished by other names, whether they are spoken of with respect or in derision. The terms brethren, believers, saints, and faithful, are most commonly used in the New Testament. The saints are so called, on the account of their being renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost. They are called brethren, because all who are born again, are one family in Christ, the sons of God in a spiritual sense. They are called believers, because they assent to the truths of divine revelation, and have received Christ as their God and only Saviour. They are called faithful, because they are servants of Christ from the heart, and not in mere externals. In the Christian world, mankind are denominated Christians in a twofold and essentially different sense. They are so called, whether they are so only nominally, or really so. That is, There are those who are Christians in name only, and there are Christians indeed. The name *Christian*, perhaps, is the most suitable title, or epithet, for all who are the disciples or followers of Christ. But, as particular passages of the sacred scriptures, have, from the ambiguity of language, and the different views of mankind, been variously interpreted by different commentaries, these diversities have given birth to a multiplicity of different sects. Hence the different sects, or denominations, of professed Christians, have been distinguished by different appellations; and these names generally have been derived from the name of the person who was the author, or who was at the head of the new sect or denomination.

But Jerusalem is justly styled the mother church. Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached, beginning at Jerusalem. However, the gospel was soon promulged in Judea and Galilee, Samaria, Ethiopia, and Cæsarea. Churches were soon planted at Antioch and Galatia, Philippi and Thessalonica, Berea and Athens, Corinth, Rome, and Colosse. The seven churches of Asia, also were founded within the first century, and the gospel preached in several other places. For several centuries, the Latin and Greek churches comprised the greater part of Christendom. On the account of their antiquity, their variableness, and scanty history, we have no very satisfactory information concerning any one. The church of Rome, is considered as the most ancient of all the established churches; but the first account of this church is very imperfect. It has not such trophies of scriptural fame as some of the other apostolical churches; although at an early period it was by no means insignificant, either for the number or piety of her converts. I shall proceed to take notice of some of the religious sects, which have sprung up, or denominations of Christians, which have been established, since the days of apostolical and primitive Christianity.

1st. The Arians first made their appearance in the year of our Lord, 315. They derive their name, and have their peculiar tenets from one Arius, a presbyter of the church of Alexandria. He insisted; that the Son of God was totally and essentially distinct from the Father; the first and noblest of those beings whom God had created; the instrument, by whose subordinate operation, he formed the universe; and therefore, inferiour to the Father both in nature and dignity. He also held, that the Holy Ghost was not God; but created by the power of the Son. The Arians owned that the Son was the Word; but they denied that Word to have been eternal. They held, that Christ hand nothing of man in him,

but the flesh, to which the Word was joined, and which was the same as the soul in our bodies. These and some other tenets which they professed, were considered as heretical by the churches in this age. In the year 320, by a council at Alexandria, under Alexander, bishop of that city, Arius was accused of impiety, and expelled from the communion of the church. In the year 325, the same things were brought and transacted against him, by three hundred and eighty fathers in the general council of Nice, assembled by Constantine. His peculiar sentiments, however, continued to spread.

2d. The Greek, or eastern church, with all the branches which have sprung from it, has as great extent of territory, perhaps, as the Latin or western church. Greece, Egypt, Abyssinia, Nubia, Lybia, and Palestine, are chiefly under the jurisdiction of her patriarchs. The Russians adhere to the doctrines and ceremonies of the Greek church, though they are now independent of the Patriarch of Constantinople. Several other places, districts, and islands are connected and belong to the eastern or Greek jurisdiction. Therefore it is with impropriety, that the church of Rome is called by her members the Catholick or Universal church. About the middle of the ninth century, in consequence of religious dissentions and controversies between the Latin church and the Greek, the latter may be said to have separated from the former. They disown the supremacy, authority, and pretensions of the Pope. They grant no indulgencies, nor do they lay any claim to the character of infallibility, like the church of Rome. They deny that there is any such place as purgatory; notwithstanding they pray for the dead, that God would have mercy on them at the general judgement. Like the Romans, they believe the doctrine of consubstantiation, or the union of the body of Christ with the bread of the sacrament. Since the Geeks became subject to the Turkish yoke, they have sunk

into the most deplorable ignorance, in consequence of the slavery and thraldom under which they groan. Their religion is now greatly corrupted. The tenets of the Latin and Greek churches, are in some respects similar; but in others, widely different. The latter deny that the church of Rome is the true, catholick church.

3d. About the year 1380, appeared the Wickliffites, the followers of the famous John Wickliffe, called the first reformer, who was born in Yorkshire. He attacked the jurisdiction of the Pope and the Bishops. For this he was twice summoned to attend a council at Lambeth, to give an account of his doctrines; but being countenanced by the duke of Lancaster, was both times dismissed without condemnation. He therefore continued to spread his new principles as usual, and drew after him a great number of disciples. The archbishop of Canterbury called another council, which condemned twenty-four propositions of Wickliffe and his disciples, about which time he died. He was doubtless a very extraordinary man, considering the times in which he lived. He discovered the absurdities and impositions of the church of Rome, and had the honesty and resolution to promulgate his opinions; which, a little more support, would probably have enabled him to establish. They were, however, considered the foundation of the subsequent reformation.

4th. The Hussites were a party of reformers, the followers of John Huss, who adopted the sentiments of Wickliffe and the Waldenses; and in the year 1407, began openly to oppose and preach against divers errours in doctrine, as well as corruptions in point of discipline, then reigning in the church. This eminent man, whose piety was equally sincere and fervent, though his zeal was perhaps too violent, and his prudence not always circumspect, was summoned to appear before the council of Constance. He was declared a heretick, and condemned to be burnt

alive, because he refused to plead guilty against the dictates of his own conscience. When he came to the place of execution, he fell on his knees, sang portions of psalms, looked steadfastly towards heaven, and repeated these words: Into thy hands, O Lord, do I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O most good and faithful God. When the chain was put about him at the stake, he said, with a smiling countenance, My Lord Jesus Christ was bound with a harder chain than this, for my sake, and why should I be ashamed of this old rusty one? Being desired to abjure, No, says Huss, I never preached any doctrine of an evil tendency; and what I taught with my lips, I seal with my blood. In the midst of flames, he departed in the triumphs of faith.

5th. In the year 1467, in Bohemia a sect of Christian reformers sprang up, who were denominated the Bohemian brethren. They treated the Pope and Cardinals, as Antichrist; and the church of Rome as the whore spoken of in Revelation. They rejected the sacraments of the Romish church, and chose laymen for their ministers. They held the scriptures to be the only rule of faith, and rejected the popish ceremonies in the celebration of mass. They held in abhorrence the worship of saints and images, celibacy, and prayers for the dead. In the year 1535, there was a union concluded between them and the Lutherans; and, afterwards they were united to the Zuinglians, whose opinions after that, they continued to follow.

6th. The Lutherans are those who embrace the opinions of one of the most eminent reformers, Martin Luther. About the year 1512, this bold, intrepid Boanerges, ventured openly to oppose the abominations both in doctrine and practice, which had crept into the church of Rome. He dared protest against the unrighteous decrees of the Popes and his adherents. Hence the name Protestant, was first given in Germany, to those who adhered to the doctrine of

Luther. The same has also been given to those of the sentiments of Calvin. It has now become a common name, or denomination for all those of the reformed churches. Though the church of Rome was once a light to the world, Luther eventually was led to consider her as spiritual Babylon, and mother of harlots; and the Pope, as Antichrist. He rejected the doctrine of popish supremacy and infallibility; of indulgences, and many other popish tenets. He reduced the number of sacraments to two, viz. baptism and the eucharist: but he did not reject the doctrine of consubstantiation; that is, that the body and blood of Christ, in a mysterious manner, are materially present in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. In this article consists the main difference between the Lutheran and English churches.

7th. About this time the Anabaptists appeared; who maintain, that baptism ought always to be performed by immersion. The Anabaptists of Germany depended much upon certain ideas which they entertained concerning a perfect church establishment, pure in its members, and free from the institutions of human policy. The most prudent part of them considered it possible, by human industry and vigilance, to purify the church; and seeing the attempts of Luther to be successful, they hoped that the period had arrived, in which the church was to be restored to this purity. Others, not satisfied with Luther's plan of reformation, undertook a visionary enterprise, to found a new church entirely spiritual and divine. This sect was soon joined by great numbers, whose characters and capacities were very different. At one time, they undertook to propagate their notions by pretended visions and miracles; at another, by force of arms; saying that Christ himself was now to take the reigns of all government into his hands. The Baptists in England and Holland, are to be considered in a different light from the Anabaptists of Germany. They profess an aversion to all

principles of rebellion and insurrection, and to enthusiastick phrensy and fanaticism. In the year 1521, Munzer was the principal leader of this sect.

8th. The Calvinists are those who embrace the doctrines and sentiments of John Calvin, one of the celebrated reformers of the Christian church, from Romish superstition and doctrinal errours. This name seems to have been given at first to those who embraced not merely the doctrines, but the church government and discipline established at Geneva, and to distinguish them from the Lutherans. But since the meeting of the synod of Dort, the name has been chiefly applied to those who embrace his leading views of the gospel, to distinguish them from the Armenians. Calvin considered every church as a separate and independent body, invested with the power of legislation for itself. He acknowledged a real, though spiritual presence of Christ in the eucharist; and he confined the privilege of communion to pious and regenerate believers. The principal doctrines of disagreement between the Armenians and Calvinists are what are called the five points, viz. the doctrines of predestination, particular redemption, total depravity, effectual calling, and the certain perseverance of the saints. Armenius had been educated in the opinions of Calvin; but thinking these doctrines as taught by him, too severe, he dissented from him. The genius, learning, eloquence, and piety of Calvin, rendered him respectable even in the eyes of his enemies.

9th. The church of England is the church established by law, in that kingdom. When and by whom Christianity was first introduced into Britain, cannot, perhaps, be exactly ascertained. Popery, however, was established here by Austin, the Monk; and its errours were every where prevalent, until Wickliffe was raised up by divine providence to refute them. The church of England remained in subjection to the Pope, until the time of Henry VIII. who was a

bigoted papist; but, falling out with the Pope about his marriage, he took the government of ecclesiastical affairs into his own hand; and having reformed many abuses, entitled himself supreme head of the church. The thirty-nine articles of this church are Calvinistical; and were passed in a convocation, and confirmed by royal authority, in the year of our Lord 1562. Its government is Episcopal, and the king is the supreme head.

10th. The Baxterians are a sect of Christians, so called from the learned and pious Richard Baxter, who was born in the year 1615. His design was to reconcile Calvin and Arminius, by forming a midway scheme between their religious systems. Baxter, it is said, wrote one hundred and twenty books, and had sixty written against him. He told a friend, that six brothers were converted by the reading his of call to the unconverted; and twenty thousand copies of these were said to have been sold in one year.

11th. The Socinians are a sect so called from Faustus Socinus, who died in Poland, in the year 1604. They maintain that Jesus Christ was a mere man, who had no existence before he was conceived by the Virgin Mary; that the Holy Ghost is no distinct person; but that the Father only is truly and properly God. They own that the name of God is given, in the holy scriptures, to Jesus Christ; but contend, that it is only a deputed title; which, however, invests him with great authority over all created beings. They deny the doctrines of atonement and imputed righteousness, and say, that Christ only preached the truth to mankind; set before them in himself an example of heroick virtue, and sealed his doctrines with his blood. Some of them likewise assert the sleep of the soul; which, they say, becomes insensible at death, and is raised again with the body at the resurrection. Doctor Price, believed in the preexistence of Christ; and likewise, that he was more than a human being. About the year 1550, there

were many Socinians in Poland. Both they and the Unitarians have various notions concerning Christ. Some of them consider him as a mere man, a prophet; others believe in the pre-existence of his soul, as the first and most excellent created intelligent; and some allow that he is a divine person, but not the independent and eternal God. Several of their religious tenets are very different from the principles of the Calvinists.

12th. About the year 1650, the sect called Quakers, took its rise in England; and they soon spread into other countries in Europe, and into the English settlements in North America. Their name was given them by their enemies, and though an epithet of reproach, it seems to be instamped upon them indelibly. George Fox, is supposed to be their first founder; but Penn and Barclay, gave to their principles a more regular form. At first they were called Seekers; but, afterwards, they assumed the appellation of Friends. They do not practise water baptism, nor observe the Lord's supper in the symbols of bread and wine. Their women become publick instructers in religion. In other respects many of them approach near the Socinians in their tenets; but some, acknowledge the doctrine of the Trinity, and the existence of holy and wicked angels.

13th. The Methodists are that denomination of Christians, which was founded in the year 1729, by one Mr. Morgan, and Mr. John Wesley. They were so called from the regularity of their lives. After Mr. Whitfield returned from America, in 1741, he declared his full assent to the doctrines of Calvin. Mr. Wesley, on the contrary, professed the Armenian sentiments. The difference in the tenets of these two great men, eventually caused a separation.

14th. The Presbyterians are so called, because they hold that there is no order established in the church by Christ and his Apostles, superiour to that of presbyters. The term dissenters, is applied to

those who separate from the established church; as the Presbyterians, Quakers, Methodists, Baptists, Independents, and others. The several denominations noticed, may serve to show, in a cursory manner, how the various sects of professing Christians took their origin. And as we are taught in the words of the text, The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch, so other places have been named, and the reasons given, of different names being applied to different denominations.

REFLECTIONS.

1st. We may see some advantages to be derived from the names of the different religious denominations. They are a means of additional light respecting church history. They are a medium of at once giving a correct view of the general principles of a person. They may serve to show, how far one sect can fellowship another. Whether they will be necessary in the meridian of the millennium day, when the watchmen shall see eye to eye, may be a query. In a future state they doubtless will not exist.

2d. A serious call is this subject, for nominal Christians to become real Christians. A mere name can avail only in time; but the thing, or reality, is of importance for eternity. At the great day of final decision, when some will see that they have only had a name to live; others, with inexpressible joy and for the honour of Christ, will see that they were Christians indeed.

3d. An exhortation, then, for all to receive Christ as their God and Saviour. They would gladly welcome some earthly friend. They perhaps would be at considerable expense, and with pomp would rejoice to wait on some great personage. But will they not receive the friend of sinners, the Lord from heaven? He proffers himself to them without money and without price. He requires not external splendour, but a willing mind and the reception of the

heart. To receive him, is life eternal begun in the soul; but, to reject him, is death eternal.

4th. How vastly different the future state of human beings from the present. How much alike the lot of the righteous and the wicked in this world! But what a perfect contrast in the world to come! Here, there is but little distinction between saint and sinner; but, hereafter, the distinction will be as great as heaven and hell. Wherever we are, then, let each one make the inquiry, Am I a Christian? *Amen.*

SERMON XVI.

MAN FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE.

Psalm cxxxix. 14.

I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

THE pious Psalmist assigns the sentiment contained in these words, as a reason why he should praise God. And surely the contemplation of the human frame is well calculated to excite the wonder and admiration of man. He should be excited with rapture at the thought of an inquiry into a work so curious and astonishing. What a variety of parts are formed, and of uses designed within the compass of a human body! How exactly is every part adapted to its purpose, and one part adjusted to another! And though all the parts of this complex fabrick, are produced and nourished from the same earth, yet how various their texture and consistence! How firm and solid the bones; how soft and pliant the flesh! how tough and flexible the muscles; how fine and feeling the nerves! how quick and lively the organs of sensation; and how promptly the limbs obey the dictates of the will!

Wonderful is the structure of the vessels which receive and distribute the nutriment, convey the blood, and carry on the respiration; and no less wonderful is the action of those vessels, in performing their respective functions. Mysterious is the power of that animal motion, on which life depends. That of the stomach, heart, and lungs, is involuntary. We can give no other account of it, than that which the apostle Paul gives: In God we live, and move, and have our being. The motion of our limbs is indeed vol-

untary; but this is equally mysterious. How is it, that a mere act of will contracts or extends the muscles of our bodies? How it is, that our volition should impart motion to the various members of our bodily frame, no philosopher or anatomist can explain.

Moreover, the mind is as wonderful as the body. This cannot be an object of sense; although it is an object of immediate consciousness. We perceive that there is something within us, superiour to that gross matter, of which the body consists. We can think, reason, and reflect; can review and contemplate our own thoughts; can call to remembrance things past; can look forward and make conjectures on things to come. In our meditations we can, in a moment, pass to distant regions and to distant worlds, and thence return at our pleasure.

The mind is in some inexplicable manner, so united to the body, that it receives all its information by means of the bodily organs. Besides, a disorder of body affects and deranges the powers of the mind; and afflictions and sorrows of mind, debilitate and waste the body. Hence we know, that there is an intimate union between these constituent parts of man. This union is necessary to the present state; but its nature, in what it consists, how it is preserved, how the soul can act in the body, and how it will receive and communicate ideas in a separate, invisible state, we cannot, at present, understand. That the soul can act in a state of separation, may be possible; for we find, that even now the greater part of its exercises, are, in a certain sense, independent of the bodily senses. It is indeed dependent on these for the first reception of its ideas; but when it has received them, it can review and compare them, and make deductions from them, without aid from the senses.

What a mystery are we to ourselves! We cannot explain the powers we possess; nor the motions and

actions we daily perform. Well may it be said, We are wonderfully made! When we look abroad and behold the manifold works of God, are they marvellous in our eyes? And does the great scheme of divine revelation, or do the doctrines of the gospel appear incomprehensible? Let us only contemplate our own frame, and we become a wonder, and incomprehensible to ourselves.

But how are we to understand the Psalmist when he says, We are fearfully made.

To this inquiry let us now give our attention.

1st. The expression imports the dignity of man in comparison with other creatures of this lower world. Man is so made, that the sight of him impresses a terrour on the beasts of the earth. Moses informs us, That God made man in his own image, and gave him dominion over every beast of the earth. When Noah came forth from the ark, God blessed him and his sons; and said, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon all that moveth on the earth. Into your hand they are delivered. To the same purpose are the words of the Psalmist: God made man a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honour, and gave him dominion over the works of his hands, and put all things under his feet. These expressions proclaim the dignity of man, and his superiour station, compared with the animal creation. Many of the animals are superiour to man in strength and activity, and armed with weapons of destruction superiour to any which man naturally possesses for his defence; yet the most ferocious of them will retreat before him. If they ever assault him, it is in some peculiar circumstance; as when they are jealous for their young, provoked with wounds, or enraged by hunger. There is something in the human attitude and aspect, which strikes them with terrour and restrains their ferocity. Yea, many of the beasts

readily submit to man's dominion, and suffer him to employ their superiour strength in his service. And St. James asserts, That every kind of beasts is tamed and hath been tamed of mankind.

Moreover, were it not for this dread of man, which is impressed on the beasts of the earth, we should be obliged always to stand armed for our defence against them. Hence the wilderness would become their exclusive habitation; our life would be a state of anxiety and terrour; and we could neither occupy the fields, nor walk the roads, nor sleep in our houses with safety. Thus we may see that man is fearfully made; as the dignity of his person awes the animals of the earth to submission, or else strikes them with dread, and excites them to shun his presence.

3d. We are fearfully made, as the Creator has impressed upon us evident marks of our immortality and accountableness. The distinguishing faculties of our minds demonstrate, that we were created for greater and nobler purposes than any of the animals around us. It does not appear consistent with the Divine wisdom and goodness, and with the economy every where observable in the works of God, that he should make such beings solely for a sphere so low as the present world, and for a duration so short as the present life. If our existence is to cease with the death of the body, why has the inspiration of the Almighty given us understanding? If we are designed only to eat, drink, and sleep, provide a successor, and then return to eternal oblivion, of what use is forethought and reflection, moral discernment, and a sense of obligation?

In the present state we find ourselves capable of progress and improvement; but we never rise to the perfection to which, in a longer space, we might attain. And many of our mortal race are removed, before they have opportunity for any improvement at

all. Must there not, then, be another state, in which we may reach the perfection of which our nature is capable, but which is unattainable here? Instinct in beasts is perfect at first. The young are nearly as sagacious as the old, in finding or constructing their habitations, in seeking and distinguishing their proper food, in the retreating from dangers, in taking their prey, in evading or resisting an enemy, and in every thing which belongs to their sphere of action. In man, reason is developed gradually, is improved by experience, and assisted by example and instruction; and, under proper culture, makes observable progress. But before it can reach its end, its progress is arrested by death. Must we not, then, conclude, that there is another state, in which the soul may still press forward, and reach that degree of knowledge and virtue, for which the present life is far too short?

There is in all men a desire of immortality; and this desire will doubtless be gratified. This world is well adapted to our condition, in regard to our bodily frame; for every passion and inclination, which belong to our animal nature, and is not a corruption or perversion of the same, can find an object for gratification. And shall we suppose, that the desire of immortality has no object? This would be to suppose that the works of God are inconsistent and unharmonious. That the desire of immortality is wrought in us by the Creator, is evident from its universality. If it were the effect of education, it would not possess all men, in all ages and countries; but would be confined to particular persons or places. This argument the apostle Paul considers, as conclusive. For the earnest expectation of the creature, waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Now he who hath wrought us to this self same thing,

is God. This is evident, for in respect to this desire of immortality, the whole creation, or the whole human race, groaneth and travelleth together.

Moreover we carry with us evidence, not only of immortality, but also of accountableness. There is in every man a moral principle, which, being in any degree enlightened, feels its obligation to avoid the evil and embrace the good. Whenever the difference between moral good and evil is stated, it is discerned and allowed by the mind. With very little instruction, man is enabled to see the essential difference between the nature of virtue and vice. Besides, the paths of wickedness are accompanied with remorse; but the work of righteousness, is peace.

Certainly, then, we are accountable beings; and, in a future state, shall receive according to our moral characters. And how solemn the thought that we are under the eye of a holy God, are on probation for his favour, are responsible for all our moral actions; that we must exist for ever in another state, and that our condition there will be according to the course which we shall have pursued here! Does our very make teach us these momentous truths? Surely we may say, We are fearfully made.

2nd. We are fearfully made; as our frame demonstrates the power, wisdom, and presence of God. Such a wonderful composition as man, must be the effect of Divine intelligence; must be the work of an infinite, independent, all wise Creator. David exclaims, Marvellous are thy works, O God! and that my soul knoweth full well. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book were all my members written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest part of the earth.

As the frame of our bodies proves God's agency, so the powers of our mind demonstrate his perfect

knowledge. He who formed the eye, shall not he see? He that planted the ear, shall not he hear? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know? Yes, he knoweth the thoughts of men.

We, then, carry about with us clear evidence, that there is a God, who is present with us, around us, and within us; that he observes all our actions, discerns all our intentions, watches all our motions, and will bring into judgement all our works. What a solemn, what a fearful thought! Shall we not reverence the presence of such a Being? Shall we not tremble at the view of our own frame, which brings him present to our minds? Well may we adopt the language of the Psalmist, O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down setting and uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down. Thou art acquainted with all my ways. There is not a word in my tongue, but thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me before and behind, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. Whither shall I go from thy presence, or flee from thy Spirit? Thou possessest my reins. I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

What stupidity must it be, to live without the belief, and act without the fear of God, when we have within ourselves a continual demonstration of his existence, power, wisdom, and Providence! The Lord demands, Will ye not tremble at my presence? He is not far from every one of us; and shall not his excellence make us afraid? Wherever we go, we are living witnesses that God is present; and whatever we do, our own frames bear incontestible evidence, that his power giveth efficiency. Our voluntary actions and involuntary motions, our souls and bodies, proclaim the power, wisdom, and presence of the supreme Being; and, at the same time, do most strikingly evince that we are fearfully made.

4th. We are fearfully made, as it respects our

frailty. Such is the tenderness of our frame, that in this tumultuous and dangerous world, in which we live, we are always exposed to casualties and wounds, to diseases and death. It may therefore, with much propriety be said, We are fearfully made.

The Psalmist prays, O make me to know my end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am. Surely every man, at his best estate, is altogether vanity. The sacred volume, to express the vanity and frailty of human life, compares it to a shadow, a flower, dust and wind. And, indeed, so precarious is the life of man, that it depends on the breath. God breathed in him the breath of life, and he became a living soul. So when his breath goeth forth, his thoughts perish, and he returneth to his dust. How fragile, then, is the spring of life? It is the breath in our nostrils; a puff of air; even a vapour, which soon vanishes. It is wind, which passes by, and comes not again.

The lungs, which are the instruments of respiration, are a tender and delicate substance. And how small is the passage which conveys the air to the internal parts, and remits it for a fresh supply! Moreover, this operation must be constant; for a short suspension would occasion death. And how many external accidents, and internal disorders may occur to obstruct the conveyance of air, or destroy the motion of the lungs! If we consider only this fragile, but essential part of the human frame, life must appear truly precarious. But every part of the system, as well as this, is liable to casualty and disease. In this curious and complicated machine are innumerable threads, vessels, and springs, on which motion and activity depend. And a very slight injury or rupture in any of them, may under certain circumstances, become fatal. To casualties we are always exposed in our labours and journeys, uor diversions and employments. The causes of disease may every where attend us; for even the air which we breathe, and the food we eat, are frequently charged with

death. Who then can at any time say, That he is sure of another hour? Must not all be constrained to acknowledge, that the springs of life are most brittle? We are often in a situation so critical, whether we discern it or not, that there is but a step, a breath, a span, between us and death.

Had we a clear discernment of the dangers which attend us wherever we go, and of the frailty of the tabernacle in which we dwell, we should live in perpetual fear. It is happy for us, that many of our dangers are concealed; otherwise, it is probable we should often be deterred from the necessary occupations of life. But we see enough to convince us, that we are fearfully made.*

But how are we to understand the Psalmist, when he says We are wonderfully made?

To this part of the subject, let us now give our attention. In the first place, let the bones in our mortal frame be considered. And it may be observed, that the bones may be regarded as the prop work, or basis, on which the human body is constructed. They bear the same relation to the animal system, as the frame to a building. They give shape and firmness to the body; support its various parts; and prevent it from the sinking by its own weight. They serve as levers, upon which the muscles act; and defend the brain, the heart, the lungs, and other vital parts from external injury.

Of the bones some are hollow, and filled with marrow; others are solid throughout; some are very small; others very large; some are round, and others are flat; some are plane, and others convex or concave: And all these several forms are requisite for the situations they occupy, and the respective functions they have to perform. The spine, or back bone, consists of twenty-four vertebræ or small bones, connected together by cartilages, articulations, and ligaments; of which seven belong to the neck, twelve to the back, and five to the

* This part of the discourse, is chiefly selected from the writings of Joseph Lathrop, D. D.

loins. In the centre of each vertebræ there is a hole for the lodgment and continuance of the spinal marrow, which extends from the brain to the lower part of the body. From these vertebræ the arched bones, called ribs, proceed; and seven of them join the breast-bone on one side, where they terminate in cartilages, and form the cavity of the thorax or breast. The five lower ribs, with a number of muscles, form the cavity of the abdomen. The spine is one of the most admirable, mechanical contrivances in the human frame. Had it consisted of only three or four bones, or had the holes in each bone not exactly corresponded, and fitted into each other, the spinal marrow would have been bruised, and life endangered at every bending of the body.

The skull is composed of ten bones; and about fifty-one are reckoned to belong to the face, the orbits of the eyes, and the jaws, in which the teeth are fixed. There are seldom more than sixteen teeth in each jaw, or thirty-two in all. The number of bones in a human body is generally estimated at about two hundred and forty-five; of which there are reckoned in the skull, head, and face, sixty-one; in the trunk, or bodily part, sixty-four; in the arms and hands, sixty; and in the legs and feet, sixty. The bones are provided with ligaments, or hinges, which bind and fasten them together, and prevent them from being displaced by continually varied motions: And, that the ligaments may work smoothly into one another, the joints are separated by cartilages or gristles, and provided with a gland for the secretion of oil or mucous, which is constantly exuding into the joints: Hence, every requisite is provided by our benevolent Creator, to prevent pain, and to promote facility of motion. In considering the joints, says Dr. Paley, there is nothing, perhaps, which ought to move our gratitude more than the reflection, how well they wear. A limb shall swing upon its hinge, or play in its socket, many hundred

times in an hour, for sixty years together, without diminution of agility, which is a long time for any thing to last, for any thing so much worked as the joints are. These few remarks may serve to show, that the bones should be considered as divine specimens of the wonderful structure of our bodily frame.

2d. The muscular system is a demonstrative proof, that we are wonderfully made. A muscle is a bundle of fleshy, and often tendinous fibres. The fleshy fibres compose the body of the muscle; and the tendinous fibres, the extremities. Some muscles are long and round; some plain and circular; some have spiral, and some have straight fibres; some are double, having a tendon running through the body from head to tail; some have two or more tendinous branches running through with various rows and orders of fibres. All these and several other varieties, are essentially requisite for the respective offices they have to perform in the animal system. The muscles constitute the fleshy parts of the human body, and give it that varied and beautiful form we observe over its surface. But their principle design, is to serve as the organs of motion. They are inserted by strong, tendinous extremities into the different bones, of which the human skeleton is composed; and, by their contraction and distention, give rise to all the movements of the body. The muscles, therefore, may be considered as so many cords attached to the bones; and the Author of nature has fixed them according to the most perfect principles of mechanism, so as to produce the fittest motions in the parts, for the movement of which they are intended.

One of the most wonderful properties of the muscles, is the extraordinary force they exert; although they are composed of such slender threads or fibres. The following facts, in relation to this point, are demonstrated by the celebrated Borelli, in his work concerning animal motion. If a man,

with his arm hanging directly downwards, lift a weight of twenty pounds, with the third or last joint of his thumb, the muscle which bends the thumb, and bears that weight, exerts a force of about three thousand pounds. When any one, standing upon his feet, springs upwards to the height of two feet, if the weight of such a man be one hundred and fifty pounds, the muscles employed in that action, will exert a force of two thousand greater; that is to say, a force of about three hundred thousand pounds. The heart at each pulse, or contraction, by which it protrudes the blood out of the arteries into the veins, exerts a force of above a hundred thousand pounds. Who can contemplate this amazing strength of the muscular system, without admiration of the power and wisdom of the Creator, who has thus endued a bundle of threads, each of them smaller than a hair, with such a degree of mechanical force? There have been about four hundred and forty-six muscles in the human body, which have been dissected and distinctly described; every one of which is essential to the performance of some one motion or other, which contributes to our ease and enjoyment; and, in most instances, a great number of them is required to perform their different functions at the same time. It has been calculated, that about a hundred muscles are employed every time we breathe. Breathing with ease, says Dr. Paley, is a blessing of every moment; yet, of all others, it is that which we possess with the least consciousness. A man in an asthma, is the only person who knows how to estimate this blessing.

Muscles, with their tendons, are the instruments by which animal motion is performed. And a muscle acts only by contraction: its force is exerted in no other way. When the exertion ceases, the muscle is relaxed by returning to its former state, but without energy. The consideration of the muscular sys-

tem does strikingly evince, That we are wonderfully made.

3d. If we notice the heart and blood-vessels, we shall discern the propriety of the exclamation, I am wonderfully made!

The heart is a hollow, muscular organ, of a conical shape, and consists of four distinct cavities. The two largest are called ventricles; and the two smallest, auricles. The ventricles send out the blood to the arteries; the auricles receive it from the veins. The heart is enclosed in the pericardium, a membranous bag, which contains a quantity of water, or lymph. This water lubricates the heart, and facilitates all its motions. The heart is the general reservoir of the blood. When the heart contracts, the blood is propelled from the right ventricle, into the lungs, through the pulmonary arteries; which, like all the other arteries, are furnished with valves, that play easily forward, but permit not the blood to return toward the heart. The blood, after circulating through the lungs, and having been there revived by coming into contact with the air, and imbibing a portion of its oxygen, returns into the left auricle of the heart, by the pulmonary vein. At the same instant, the left ventricle drives the blood into the aorta, a large artery, which sends off branches to supply the head and arms. Another large branch of the aorta, descends along the inside of the back bone, and detaches numerous ramifications to nourish the bowels and inferiour extremities. After serving the most remote extremities of the body, the arteries are converted into veins; which, in their return to the heart, gradually unite into larger branches, till the whole terminate in one great trunk, called the *vena cava*, which discharges itself into the right auricle of the heart, and completes the circulation. As soon as the blood is received by the heart from the veins of the body, and before it is sent out again

into its arteries, it is carried, by the force of the contraction of the heart, and by means of the separate, pulmonary artery to the lungs, and made to enter their manifold vessels; from which, after being invigorated by coming in contact with the air, it is brought back by the large, pulmonary vein once more to the heart, to be from thence distributed anew into the system. This assigns to the heart a double office. The pulmonary circulation is a system within a system; and one action of the heart is the origin of both. Each ventricle of the heart is reckoned to contain about one ounce, or two table spoonsfull of blood. The heart contracts four thousand times every hour; and consequently, there passes through it, two hundred and fifty pounds of blood in one hour. And if the mass of blood in a human body be reckoned at an average of twenty-five pounds, it will follow, that the whole mass of blood passes through the heart, and consequently through the thousands of ramifications of the veins and arteries, fourteen times every hour; or, about once every four minutes. We may acquire a rude idea of the force with which the blood is impelled from the heart, by considering the velocity with which water issues from a syringe or from the pipe of a fire engine. Could we behold these rapid motions incessantly going on within us, it would overpower our minds with astonishment, and even with terrour. The arteries into which the blood is forced, branch in every direction through the body, like the roots and branches of a tree; running through the substance of the bones, and every part of the animal frame, till they are lost in such fine tubes as to be wholly invisible. In the parts where the arteries are lost to the sight, the veins take their rise; and, in their commencement, are also imperceptible. Thus we see, that the arteries and veins are two systems of blood vessels; and that the heart is the engine which works their machinery, and causes the circulation of the blood. On a grand

purpose to be answered, is the distributing of nourishment from our daily food to every part; even to every extremity of the body. And as an arterial rupture or wound would be more dangerous than that of a vein, the arteries lie the deepest, and are formed with much tougher and stronger coats than the veins. Hence, the system of the heart and blood vessels proclaim, that we are wonderfully made.

4th. The same will also appear, if we consider respiration, or the act of breathing. The organs of respiration are the lungs. They are divided into five lobes; three of which lie on the right, and two on the left side of the thorax. The substance of the lungs is chiefly composed of infinite ramifications of the trachea, or wind pipe; which, after gradually becoming more and more minute, terminate in little cells, or vesicles, which have a free communication with one another. At each inspiration, these pipes and cells are filled with air, which is again discharged by expiration. In this manner, a circulation of air, which is necessary to the existence of men and other animals, is constantly kept up as long as life remains. The air-cells of the lungs open into the wind pipe, by which they communicate with the external atmosphere. The whole internal structure of the lungs is lined by a transparent membrane, estimated at only the thousandth part of an inch in thickness; but whose surface, from its various convolutions, measures sixteen square feet, which is equal to the external surface of the body. On this thin and extensive membrane, innumerable veins and arteries are distributed, some of them finer than hairs; and through these vessels all the blood of the system is successively propelled, by a most curious and admirable mechanism. It has been computed, that the lungs, on an average, contain about two hundred and eighty cubick inches, or about five English quarts of air. At each inspiration, about forty cubick inches of air

are received into the lungs, and the same quantity discharged at each expiration. On the supposition that twenty respirations take place in a minute, it will follow, that in one minute, we inhale eight hundred cubick inches; in an hour, forty-eight thousand; and in a day, one million one hundred and fifty-two thousand cubick inches; a quantity which would fill seventy-seven wine hogsheads, and would weigh forty pounds. By means of this function, a vast body of air is daily brought into contact with the mass of blood, and communicates to it its vivifying influence; and, therefore, it is of the utmost importance to health, that the air, of which we breathe so considerable a quantity, should be pure and uncontaminated with noxious effluvia. In our present state, it is essential to life that we exist in the element of air. And how mysterious the formation of the lungs to be receiving constant and fresh supplies, for the purpose of respiration, and the continuance of animal life! Although the act of breathing is a constant succession of inhaling and exhaling the surrounding air, still we are generally almost insensible of this vital impulse. But, whenever we give our minds to the consideration of the curious and marvellous machinery which produces respiration, we contemplate a system that proclaims, We are wonderfully made!

5th. The process by which our daily food is digested, is truly wonderful. Digestion is performed by the stomach, which is a membranous and muscular bag, furnished with two orifices. By the one, it has a communication with the throat; and by the other, with the bowels. The food, after being moistened by the saliva, is received into the stomach, where it is still farther diluted by the gastrick juice, which has the power of dissolving every kind of animal and vegetable substance. Part of it is afterwards absorbed by the lymphatick and lacteal vessels, and carried into the circulating system, and converted

into blood, for supplying that nourishment which the perpetual waste of our bodies demands.

Our food undergoes two great preparations before it becomes nutritive to our bodies. The first is by mastication and moisture in the mouth: the second, by the process of digestion in the stomach. The last is a surprising dissolution; for it converts the aliment into pulp, which, though lately consisting of perhaps ten different viands, is reduced to nearly an uniform substance, and to a state fitted for yielding its essence, which is called chyle, but which more nearly resembles milk than any other liquor with which it can be compared. For the straining off of this fluid from the digested aliment in the course of its long progress through the body, myriads of capillary tubes, or pipes as small as hairs, open their orifices into the cavity of every part of the intestines. These tubes which are so fine and slender as not to be visible, unless when distended with chyle, soon unite into larger branches, which convey it into a common reservoir, or receptacle, containing about two table spoonsfull. From this, a duct or main pipe, discharges it into a large vein, which soon conveys the chyle, now flowing along with the blood, to the heart. The action of the intestines pushes forward the grosser part of the aliment, at the same time that the more subtle parts, which we call chyle, are, by a series of gentle compressions, squeezed into the narrow orifices of the lacteal veins. And animal digestion carries about it the marks of being a power and process completely distinct from every other; at least from every chymical process, with which we are acquainted. When we consider the process of digestion, its several connections, relations, and purposes, we may well acknowledge with admiration, We are wonderfully made.

6th. If a few appropriate remarks be made in regard to perspiration, our wonder will be justly excited. Perspiration is the evacuation of the juices

of the body through the pores of the skin. It has been calculated, that there are above three hundred thousand millions of pores in the glands of the skin, which covers the body of a middle sized man. Through these pores, more than one half of what we eat and drink passes off by insensible perspiration. If we consume eight pounds of food in a day, five pounds of it are insensibly discharged by perspiration. During a night of seven hours' sleep, we perspire about forty ounces, or two pounds and a half. At an average, we may estimate the discharge from the surface of the body, by sensible and insensible perspiration, at from half an ounce to four ounces an hour. This is a most wonderful part of the animal economy, and is absolutely necessary to our health, and even to our very existence. When partially obstructed, colds, rheumatisms, fevers, and other inflammatory disorders, are produced; and were it completely obstructed, the vital functions would be clogged and impeded in their movements, and death would inevitably ensue. Perspiration is effected in consequence of the action and heat throughout the human system; and it is increased by external heat and bodily exercise. It may be impeded by various means, external and internal. Thus the nutritive portion of our food, which does not become incorporated into our bodies, is evacuated through the pores of the skin. How mysterious the mechanism of perspiration! How wonderfully are we made!

7th. If we consider sensation, or perception, by means of the senses, we shall be furnished with another argument to convince us that we are wonderfully made. The nerves are generally considered as the instruments of sensation. They are soft white cords, which proceed from the brain and spinal marrow. They come forth originally, by pairs. Ten pair proceed from the medulary substance of the brain, which are distributed to all parts of the head and neck. Thirty pair proceed from the spi-

nal marrow, through the vertebræ, to all the other parts of the body, there being forty in all. These nerves, the ramifications of which are infinitely various and minute, are distributed upon the heart, lungs, blood vessels, bowels, and muscles, till they terminate on the skin, or external covering of the body. Impressions of external objects are received by the brain from the adjacent organs of sense, and the brain exercises its commands over the muscles and limbs, by means of the nerves.

I shall now conclude these descriptions, with the following summary of the parts of the body. The bones, by their joints and solidity, form the foundation of this fine machine: The ligaments are strings, which unite the parts together. The muscles are fleshy substances, which act as elastick springs to put them in motion. The nerves, which are dispersed over the whole body, connect all the parts together.

The arteries and veins, like rivulets, convey life and health throughout. The heart, placed in the centre, is the focus, where the blood collects; or the acting power, by means of which it circulates and is preserved. The lungs, by means of another power, draw in the external air, and expel hurtful vapours. The stomach and intestines are the magazines, where every thing that is required for the daily supply, is prepared. The brain, the seat of perception, memory, and reason, is formed in a manner suitable to the dignity of its inhabitants. The senses, which are the soul's ministers, warn it of all that is necessary either for its pleasure or use. But the union of soul and body so as to constitute but one being, is the wonder of wonders in regard to our existence. That natures so essentially different as matter and mind, should have the most intimate, mutual sympathies and influence over each other, is truly astonishing. The admirable mechanism of the various senses, should excite our wonder; and their dignified offices of administration to the soul, are marvellous indeed!

When we contemplate the mysterious union of our souls and bodies; their oneness in regard to being; that they are to be a long time separate in different worlds, and at last re-united; we cannot hesitate to adopt the language of the devout Psalmist, I am fearfully and wonderfully made. The various descriptions to which we have been attending, are but a few, and those very imperfect delineations of the divine wonders, exhibited in the existence of a human being. But these short sketches do naturally call forth the exclamation, Adorable Creator! with what skill hast thou formed us!

IMPROVEMENT.

This subject suggests a variety of moral and religious reflections.

1st. As the economy of the human frame, when seriously contemplated, has a tendency to excite admiration and astonishment, so it ought to impress us with a sense of our continual dependence on a Supreme Power. What an immense multiplicity of machinery must be in action to enable us to breathe, to feel, and to walk! Hundreds of bones of diversified forms, connected together by various modes of articulation; hundreds of muscles to produce motion, each of them acting in at least ten different capacities; hundreds of tendons and ligaments to connect the bones and muscles; hundreds of arteries to convey the blood to the remotest part of the system; hundreds of veins to bring it back to its reservoir, the heart; thousands of glands, secreting humours of various kinds from the blood; thousands of lacteal and lymphatick tubes, absorbing and conveying nutriment to the circulating fluid; millions of pores through which the perspiration is continually issuing; an infinity of ramifications of nerves, diffusing sensation throughout all the parts of this exquisite machine; and the heart at every pulsation exerting a force, of a hundred thousand pounds, in order to

preserve all this complicated machinery in constant operation! The whole of this vast system of mechanism must be in action, before we can walk across our apartments! We admire the operation of a steam engine, and the force it exerts. But though it is constructed of the hardest materials which the mines can supply, in a few months some of its essential parts are worn and deranged, even though its action be frequently discontinued. But the animal machine, though constructed, for the most part, of the softest and most flabby substances, can go on without intermission in all its diversified movements, by night and by day, for the space of eighty or a hundred years; the heart giving ninety-six thousand strokes every twenty-four hours, and the whole mass of blood, rushing through a thousand pipes of all sizes, every four minutes! And, is it man that governs these nice and complicated movements? Did he set the heart in motion, or endue it with the muscular force it exerts? And when it has ceased to beat, can he command it again to resume its functions? No; for man knows neither the secret springs of the machinery within him, nor the half of the purposes for which they serve, or of the movements they perform. And can any thing more strikingly demonstrate our dependence every moment on a superiour Agent? Were a single pin of the machinery within us, and over which we have no controul, either broken or deranged, a thousand movements might instantly be interrupted, and our bodies left to crumble into dust.

2d. This subject is not only peculiarly adapted to excite our admiration in view of the manifold wisdom of God, but also strikingly to display his wonderful goodness. How many things in our frame must go right, for us to be an hour at ease! How many more still, that we may be vigorous and active! Yet vigour and activity are in a vast plurality of instances, preserved in human bodies, notwithstanding they depend

upon so great a number of instruments of motion; and notwithstanding the defect or disorder of a very minute instrument may be attended with grievous inconvenience, if not with extreme pain. Let me notice the instance of a certain man, who in general was in good health, and yet in a sad state. Owing to the want of the use of the two little muscles that serve to lift up the eyelids, he had almost lost the use of his sight, being constrained, as long as this defect lasted, to shove up his eyelids every moment with his own hands. And how little do those who enjoy the perfect use of their organs, know the comprehensiveness of the blessing! They may perceive the desirable result, but how insensible are they of the multitude of occurrences and rectitudes by which it is effected!

For a moment let us consider how manifold is the exhibition of Divine goodness in some of the properties of the tongue. It has been said, as a fact in general, that when nature attempts to work two or more purposes by one instrument, she does both or all imperfectly. But is this true of the tongue, regarded as an instrument of speech, of taste, or of glutition. So much otherwise, that most persons, perhaps nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand, by the instrumentality of this one organ, speak, taste, and swallow very well. Indeed the constant warmth and moisture of the tongue, the thinness of the skin, and the papillæ upon its surface, qualify this organ for its office of tasting, as much as its inextricable multiplicity of fibres do for the rapid movements, which are necessary to speech.

We may also see from one or two remarks, how happy it is for us, that our vital motions are involuntary. What a labour, if we had the care of keeping our stomachs at work, and our hearts beating! Suppose these things did not depend upon our effort, but upon our bidding, or attention, they would leave us no leisure for any thing else. We should have to

be continually upon the watch, and live in constant fear: Nor would such a constitution allow us to sleep. How benignant, then, our adorable Creator, to watch and order all the springs and motions essential to life!

Moreover, the proportions and beauty of the human frame do show forth the Divine goodness. Only consider what the parts and materials are, of which the fairest body is composed, and no further observation will be necessary to show how well these things are wrapped up, so as to form a mass which shall be capable of symmetry in its proportion, and of beauty in its aspect. How are the bones covered, the bowels concealed, the roughness of the muscles smoothed and softened! And how over the whole is spread an integument, which converts the disgusting materials of a dissecting room into an object of attraction to the sight; or, at least, presents that appearance, which imparts ease and satisfaction to the mind! Were it possible that we could view the mechanism of our bodies, the sight would terrify and overwhelm us. Would we dare make a single movement, or take a step, if we saw our blood circulating, the tendons pulling, the lungs blowing, the humours filtrating, and all the incomprehensible assemblage of fibres, tubes, pumps, valves, currents, pivots, which sustain an existence so precarious, and a being so presumptuous? The agreeable symmetry of parts, and the beautiful external texture of the human frame, exhibit indubitable evidence of benevolent design, and of great attention and accuracy in prosecuting that design: And their author and designer is the God of love.

The several senses might be considered as so many distinct arguments to prove the benevolence of the Divine Being towards us. They are not only instruments for the continuance and necessities of life, and of knowledge to the soul; but also of a constant train of manifold enjoyments, both bodily and mental. At the mere mention of the terms hearing,

seeing, tasting, feeling, and smelling, the recollection of their thousands of pleasures is necessarily called to mind. Our souls and bodies are both so constituted in their various faculties as to be heralds, for proclaiming the praises, not only of the wisdom, but also of the marvellous goodness of God.

3d. The study of the human frame has a powerful tendency to excite emotions of gratitude. Man is naturally a thoughtless and ungrateful creature. These dispositions are partly owing to ignorance of the wonders of the human frame, and of the admirable economy of the visible world; and this ignorance is owing to the want of those specifick instructions, which ought to be communicated by parents and teachers in connection with religion. For there is no rational being who is acquainted with the structure of his animal system, and reflects upon it with the least degree of attention, but must feel a sentiment of admiration and gratitude. The science which unfolds to us the economy of our bodies, shows us on what an infinity of springs, and motions, and adaptations our life and comfort depend. And when we consider that all these movements are performed without the least care or laborious effort on our part, if we be not entirely brutish and insensible of our dependence on a superiour power, we must be filled with emotions of gratitude towards him, whose hands have made and fashioned us, and who giveth us life and breath, and all things. Some of the motions to which I have adverted, depend upon our will; and with what celerity do they obey his commands! Before we can rise from our chair and walk across the room, a hundred muscles must be set in motion: every one of these must be relaxed or constricted just to a certain degree, and no more; and all must act harmoniously at the same instant of time; and, at the command of the soul, all these movements are instantaneously performed. When I wish to lift my hand to my head, every part of the body requisite

to produce the effect, is put in motion: The nerves are braced, the muscles stretched or relaxed, the bones play in their sockets, and the whole animal machine concurs in the action, as if every nerve and muscle had heard a sovereign and resistless call. If I wish the next moment to extend my hand to my foot, all these muscles are thrown into a different state, and a new set are brought along with them into action: And thus we may vary, every moment, the movements of the muscular system, and the mechanical actions it produces, by a simple change in our volition. Were we not daily accustomed to such varied and voluntary movements, or could we contemplate them in any other machine, we should be lost in wonder and astonishment.

Besides these voluntary motions, there are a thousand important functions, which have no dependance upon our will. Whether we think of it or not, whether we be sleeping or waking, sitting or walking, the heart is incessantly exerting its muscular power at the centre of the system, and sending off streams of blood through hundreds of pipes; the lungs are continually expanding and contracting their thousand vesicles, and imbibing the vital principle of the air; the stomach is grinding the food; the lacteals and lymphaticks are extracting nourishment for the blood; the liver and kidneys drawing off their secretions; and the perspiration issuing from millions of pores. These and many other important functions, with which we are unacquainted, and over which we have no controul, ought to be regarded as the immediate agency of the Deity within us, and should incite our incessant admiration and praise. In every breath we draw and emit, there is an important reason, for our hearts to flow with gratitude to God. That part of the air inhaled into the lungs which is vital, serves to purify and inspirit the blood. The remaining part, which is evolved, is rendered fetid and entirely unfit to be breathed again. In consequence

of the warmth attracted from our system, it becomes lighter than common air; therefore, it rises above our heads before the next inspiration. Were it not for this circumstance, it would accumulate on the surface of the earth, and particularly in our apartments, to such a degree as to produce diseases, pestilence, and death, in rapid succession. But, being a little lighter than the surrounding air, it flies upwards, and we never breathe it again, till it enter into new and salutary combinations. How does every thing pertaining to our frame, or relating to our existence, admonish us that our souls should be continually ascending to God with the most lively emotions of gratitude.

Permit me now to notice a peculiarity in the constitution of our animal frame which we are apt to overlook, and for which we are never sufficiently grateful; and that is, the power it possesses of self restoration. A wound heals up of itself; a broken bone is made firm again by a callus; and a dead part is separated and thrown off. If all the wounds we have ever received, were still open and bleeding a fresh, to what a miserable condition should we be reduced! But by a system of internal powers, beyond all human comprehension as to the mode of their operation, such dismal effects are effectually prevented. In short, when we consider that health depends upon such a numerous assemblage of moving organs, and that a single spring out of action, might derange the whole machine, and put a stop to all its complicated movements, can we refrain from joining with the Psalmist, in his pious exclamation, and grateful resolution, How precious are thy wonderful contrivances concerning me, O God! how great is the sum of them! I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.

4th. This discourse should be improved as an excitement for us to become more particularly and ex-

tensively informed in regard to the manifold subjects of divine revelation. In proportion to the extent and propriety of our investigations into the numerous and important truths which God has revealed, so shall we be qualified to render to his name, that glory which is due. Consequently, then, if we do not make suitable exertions, and improve all the means granted us for the enlarging of our conceptions in relation to the divine works, we are guilty of robbing God of his declarative glory. Some, who profess Christianity, seem to be content with the mere consciousness, that they have a soul and body; and imagine it does not concern them to inquire particularly about them, so as to understand the human system, and the offices of the faculties of the soul. But such a sentiment is indeed unbecoming a heathen. Professed infidels ought to be ashamed to behold professing Christians, satisfied with scanty and vague views of so many important subjects, presented to them in the divine word. Such conduct too much resembles that of the most brutish and stupid sinner, who would consider the highest attainments of religion to consist in the mere belief of a God, a heaven, and a hell.

To overlook the amazing scene of Divine intelligence, as exhibited in the human system, or to consider it as beneath our notice, marks a weak and undiscriminating mind, if it be not a characteristick of impiety. The man, who disregards the visible displays of infinite Wisdom, or who neglects to investigate them when opportunity offers, acts as if he considered himself already possessed of a sufficient portion of intelligence, and stood in no need of such sensible assistances to direct his conceptions of the Creator. Pride and false conceptions of the nature and design of true religion, frequently lie at the foundation of all that indifference and neglect, with which the visible works of God are treated, by those who make pretensions to a high degree of spiritual at-

tainments. The truly pious man, will trace with wonder and delight, the footsteps of his Father and his God, wherever they appear in the variegated scene of creation around him, and will be filled with sorrow and contrition of heart, that amidst his excursions and solitary walks, he has so often disregarded the works of the Lord, and the operation of his hands.

These remarks are made, for the purpose of emulating professed Christians to expand their conceptions, and enable them to take large and comprehensive views of the perfections and the providence of the Almighty. It is much to be regretted that so many members of the Christian Church, are absolute strangers to such studies and contemplations; while the time and attention that might have been devoted to such exercises, have, in many cases, been usurped by the most grovelling affections, by foolish pursuits, and slanderous conversation. But shall the most trifling occurrences be deemed worthy of attention, and occupy much of our precious time, and shall the mighty acts of the Lord, and the visible wonders of his power and wisdom, be thrown completely into the shade? To survey with an eye of intelligence, the wide extended theatre of the Divine operations; to mark the agency of the eternal Mind in every object we behold, and in every movement within us and around us, are some of the noblest attainments of the rational soul; and, in conjunction with every other Christian study and acquirement, tend to make the man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto every good work. By such studies we are, in some measure, assimilated to the principalities above, whose powers of intellect are ever employed in such investigations; and are gradually preparing for bearing a part in their immortal hymn, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints. Thou art worthy to receive glory, and honour, and power,

for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

5th. This subject suggests the importance of daily preparation for death, and should awaken our attention to the vast concerns of immortality. Our bodies must return to the common mass of their original clay; and our souls enter the invisible world. And the voice of wisdom calls to us, to prepare for the change which is before us, and which may be very near: Beings, accountable to God as we are, designed for immortality, shortly to be removed, and insecure of another day, should be making constant preparations for our departure and entrance upon another state of existence.

And in the view of human frailty, nothing can appear more reasonable than daily prayer. How does it become us to abound in ejaculations to the Framer and Preserver of our bodies, and the Father of our spirits? Would a man who believed this day to be his last, neglect to call upon God? Would he go forth into the business and company of the world without directing a thought, or addressing a petition to him? And indeed no man knows on any day, but that it may be his last. Every one, then, on each morning, ought to commend himself to God's protection, through the day, to walk in his fear; and at evening should not dare retire to rest, till he confess his sins, acknowledge the manifold benefits of the day, and invoke the Divine blessing through the night. Every thing around us, and all the circumstances of our being, call upon us to pray without ceasing. We have the sentence of death in ourselves. Our frame declares its own frailty, and predicts its own dissolution. From our own selves we are taught the most interesting lessons, and derive the most impressive exhortations. We are fearfully made.

* This part of the discourse is chiefly selected from the Christian Philosopher.

If we hearken not to the solemn language of our own frail bodies, to the precepts of weakness and pain, of sickness and decay, what admonitions would command our attention, and impress our minds? How unaccountable is the stupidity of mortals! They complain of infirmities, and groan under pains; but do not realize that they must die, must pass to another world, and there be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body. And how easy for that Power which made our wonderful frame, to cause its dissolution. The air and food essential to life, may become the means of death. When in our full strength, we are receiving the richest nourishment and stimulous to promote vigour and activity, these may only serve to feed and render fatal some fever, and render our bodies richer food for worms. Innumerable unseen dangers surround us; and our whole frame is liable to the attack and arrest of death. Notwithstanding all our circumspection to prevent diseases, and our most vigilant exertions to promote health, we die; unless the Lord continually watch and defend all the springs of life. The king of terrours has thousands of avenues to enter our clayey tabernacle, and myriads at his command continually armed with the weapons of death. Moreover, nothing but Omnipotence can secure us one moment from his fatal arrest, or prevent any one of his legions from discharging some of his deadly instruments which they hold continually levelled at our hearts. We are constantly as dependent on God for the continuance of life, as we were for our first breath. Then may our great concern be to prepare for death, and for a glorious immortality.

6th. If we are wonderfully made in regard to our present frame, we may infer, that the bodies of the righteous in the resurrection will be incomparably glorious. When they shall be raised, they will be so much changed in their constitution, as to wear, in various respects, an entirely new character. They

will be incorruptible immortal bodies, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption; and this mortal, immortality. As they will serve God day and night in his temple, so they will be raised in power, and endued with faculties suited to the never ceasing employments and enjoyments of the heavenly world. Moreover, at the resurrection they will be arrayed in glory and beauty. The Saviour will change their vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body. When the Archangel shall sound his trump, in the twinkling of an eye the earth will heave; tombs disclose; and myriads of spiritually arrayed forms, bright as the sun, arise and ascend to heaven. Are believers often affected in view of their frail, perishable bodies? What consolation! How sublime, how delightful the doctrine of the resurrection! The future glory of these animal frames, when changed into spiritual bodies, will exceed the utmost conceptions of human imagination. They will be exalted, adorned, and enraptured as suitable mansions for glorified spirits. Though our mortal frames are a subject of interesting contemplation, yet how inferiour, compared to their future incorruptible, immortal, and spiritual attributes. The constitution, arrangement, and qualities of glorified bodies, will doubtless be truly delightsome, astonishing, and inconceivably glorious. *Amen.*

SERMON XVII.

TRUE RELIGION ALL IMPORTANT.

Isaiah xx. 20.

For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.

MANKIND are subjects of the highest prosperity and affluence, and of the lowest depths of adversity and poverty. Uniformity is by no means the common lot of the human race; but diversity and contrast are peculiarities as it respects the condition of man. There are not only the high and low, rich and poor, bond and free; but innumerably varied and diversified are their situations and circumstances. Through the journey of life, some make use of a beautiful and elegant cane; whilst others are assisted by an old and crooked staff. Some are cheered with the enjoyment of a comfortable degree of health all their days; and others are scarcely ever exempt from disease. Some live in great style as it respects their houses, furniture, and equipage; but others have their residence in an uncomfortable hut, and scarcely obtain the necessities of life. Dives fared sumptuously every day, while Lazarus enjoyed but few of the good things of this present world. But whether mankind in their pilgrimage state, travel a road comparatively smooth and pleasant, or rough and unpleasant, they soon are entombed in the silent grave; their bodies intermingled with the common dust, and their souls in a world of spirits. Hence, the manner of our journeying through this vale of tears, is of little importance, compared with our future destiny; our

eternal home. The words of the text are a proverbial saying; and their most literal meaning or import is expressive of a state of difficulty, of uneasiness and distress. When a bed is too short, a person cannot lay at his ease; but is perplexed in the hours of rest. When the covering is too narrow, he is exposed to the severities of a cold night. The moral, or lesson of instruction to the Jews, was to teach them that their confederacy with the Egyptians, could not defend them against the Assyrians and Chaldeans; nor could their numbers and fortifications defend them against the Romans, when God should forsake them and become their enemy. Neither could their temple, altar, sacrifices, nor Pharisaical righteousness recommend them to his favour, as long as they rejected Christ. For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it. These words, with those in connexion, in a figurative manner convey this solemn and alarming truth: that there are certain kinds of religion which are essentially defective, and which will fail those who embrace them in the great day of trial and final decision. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious corner Stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgement also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. From the time, that it goeth forth, it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report. For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap

himself in it. In the illustration of this subject it is my design to bring to view some of those kinds of religion, that are founded not on a sure, but false foundation; and to show that they are essentially deficient, and ruinous to the soul. Amongst the different varieties and sects of religion in the world, there are strictly but two kinds, the true and false. The one will support a man in the solemn and trying hour of death, and lead to joys on high; but the other then forsakes the soul, when it is destroyed suddenly, and that without remedy. But to descend to particulars; I would observe in the first place, that infidelity is a religion which is essentially defective, and which will fail those who embrace it in the great day of trial and final decision. By infidelity, is meant deism; or a rejection of the Saviour, as the only Mediator between God and man, and as the only possible way of salvation. Persons of this description, glory in the light of nature as being sufficient to lead to a true belief and to exalted views of the being and perfections of God, and to teach all those ways which are necessary to glorify him. But through the depravity of the human heart, and the consequent blindness of the mind, where mankind have been left to nature's light, they have formed strange ideas concerning a God, and their worship has been a scene of folly and madness, of most degrading infatuation. Some have been content with a god of clay; others, of wood. Some have had a silver god; and others have had one formed of gold. Creatures have been worshipped as the Creator, and natural objects have been adored as Deity. But how essentially defective such views and service? How abominable in the sight of a holy God, and how degrading to man, considered as a rational and immortal being? Surely nature's light is become darkness in consequence of our apostacy. It leads none of the human race to know, to love, and serve the true God; but all pursue their own vain imaginations, and their foolish heart is most strangely darkened.

But let the deist have the light of divine revelation; let him have the Bible in his hand, and form consistent and exalted views of the character and designs of God. Is he not now built on a rock, and not on a sandy foundation? No; for when he knows there is a God, he glorifies him not as God And as to the sins of his heart and life, reason is insufficient to lead him to true repentance; and the influence of the Holy Spirit he resists, and denies its necessity. To godly sorrow, and that repentance which is unto salvation, he is an entire stranger; and that he is a transgressor, not only the word of God, but his own conscience bears witness. And when stung with guilt, and alarmed at his condition, he denies the Lord Jesus; and there is none other name under heaven, given amongst men whereby we can be saved. When the law condemns, of the gospel he is ashamed. To what then can his hope be compared, except to that of the hypocrite's, which perisheth? Shall we say, he hopes for pardon on the account of repentance? But infidelity is opposed to a penitent life, and makes its boast and glory in a self-justifying spirit. Notwithstanding sin has entered the world, and death by sin; and death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. But the advocates for deism may reply, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement. Alas! how has the hour of death blasted the expectations of thousands; and too late convinced them, that their hopes and confidence were a most delusive, and wretched dream. Reason is too short; in its greatest extent, it is far too narrow to point out to a world lying in wickedness, the road to heaven and way of salvation. Those who reject divine revelation as the only sure way of eternal life, do frequently have their minds distressed, and they have no efficient comforter. In vain do they attempt to make their beds smooth and easy; for they frequently lie down on their pillows with anguish in their souls. All the covering which they can frame to hide their

guilt, is no better than fig-leaves; for the eye of omniscience searches them through and through. And says the Saviour, Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. He adds, Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels. And whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny, before my Father which is in heaven. If the eyes of unbelievers were not shut against the word of God, how would such alarming declarations of the Redeemer make them shudder, and cause their hearts to quake for fear! Now they hear the voice of mercy, and yet refuse that salvation which was the purchase of a Saviour's death. But when they hear the voice of the Archangel, will not their religion appear essentially defective, and fail them as a false refuge in the great day of trial and final decision?

2d. Morality, considered as the essence and foundation of religion, is essentially defective, and will not be able to stand the test before the judgement seat of Christ. The moralist, perhaps, would divide his religion into external and internal. External morality relates to the outward conduct of man towards man, and to the refraining from open impiety towards God. Thus we see some who are civil, courteous, and upright in their daily deportment, and whose tongues are not ready to revile others; neither are they the instruments of profanity. They not only are free from injustice, intemperance, and irreligion, but they are amiable and engaging in their manners. Instead of wrangling, reproaches, and contentions, they lead peaceable and quiet lives. Perhaps they are hospitable and charitable, condescending and forbearing, and even ornaments to society. Moreover, they may turn their attention to what is internal; may guard against violent anger; against a spirit of hatred, envy, and jealousy; and

may cultivate those dispositions which are generous, humane, and magnanimous. And O, that such virtues were more general, and that they might abound in all. They would appear the most interesting and their beauty shine in the most lively colours, if we should only contrast the deformities of immorality and ungodliness. But is not such a religion complete? Is it essentially defective, and insufficient to crown mortals with a glorious immortality? Hear the declaration of eternal truth: Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Now the one who takes morality as a substitute for the renovating influences of the Holy Spirit; and who trusts in it as the foundation of his hopes and salvation, is a stranger to the renewing grace and pardoning mercy of God; and like Nicodemus, wonders How can these things be. If a person see not the plague, the awful depravity of his own heart, and feel himself in a state of alienation and apostacy from God, he will seek to be justified by works and not by grace. But compared with the divine law, how is the religion of any man too short, too narrow, and essentially defective. How must uneasiness and distress seize the soul, when it considers the solemn denunciation, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. The moralist walks in his own light, and not according to the light of the gospel. He may have a lively imagination, but still he rejects Christ as the way, the truth, and the life. Hear the saying of the prophet, Isaiah: Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow. Then how will morality fail its votaries in the great day of trial and final decision. Perhaps the inquiry will be made, Has not the Saviour abundantly inculcated all the duties of morality; and have not the prophets

and apostles interwoven it in all their writings? They certainly have, and every minister of the gospel ought to follow their example. And surely it is commendable for any people to be moral; but they should take heed and beware, that they do not neglect the other important and essential duties of Christianity. The deist or moralist may say, He has a full belief of the existence of a supreme Being. To such an one the reply of St. James is applicable: Thou believest there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble. Yes, they do more; they believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the only possible medium of salvation for lost man. Morality is essential in order to a Christian walk; but a person may be very moral and not be a follower of Christ, and not obtain salvation. What will it avail to honour and serve men, if we do not honour and serve our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ? We should not only be moral, but godly; and our chief study should be to know and do the will of our Father, which is in heaven. Unless we become reconciled to him, and be his servants through the light of the gospel and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, our death-bed will be anguish to our souls; our entrance into the invisible world, terrour and dismay; and eternity will only serve to render our existence most wretched.

3d. Knowledge, or any natural attainments are entirely insufficient as a ground or means of obtaining the favour of God, and as a religion to secure the salvation of the soul. The acquisition of useful knowledge is both the privilege and duty of man. And so far as any have opportunities of acquiring worthy attainments, they cannot neglect them without contracting guilt. Activity and improvement should appear manifest in the lives of those who are come to the years of understanding; and should be a witness for them, to testify that they have improved their natural talents. Extensively varied are the

situations, pursuits, and prospects of mankind; but whatever be their talents or privileges, they are to improve them; or they will fall under the reproof and condemnation of the idle and slothful servant. And we behold some whose minds are refined, their manners polished, and, from their excellent attainments, their station is elevated. They have extensive information in those things which respect the present life, and which renders them agreeable and interesting companions, and useful members in society. Moreover, the minds of some are well stored with a knowledge of the Scriptures; and their reasonings concerning the important doctrines and duties of revelation are forcible and conclusive. Such knowledge and attainments are truly desirable, and demand suitable and seasonable attention. Still one thing may be lacking, which will render all essentially defective in the last decisive day.

A saving knowledge of the true God may be wanting, whom to know aright is life eternal. Such acquirements are far too short, compared with the one thing needful; and a covering infinitely too narrow for the soul, when contrasted with the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness. They all dwindle into nothing and appear mere vanity, in comparison with the love of God shed abroad in the heart. The apostle Paul comes directly to the point, when he says, Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Then whatever we know, or whatever we do, if we have not been translated from the kingdom of sin and satan, and brought to love God supremely, and

walk in newness of life, we are no better than whitened sepulchres which are filled with all manner of impurity. Mankind may know much, and do much, and for which they are worthy of respect and esteem among their fellow men, and yet be wholly destitute of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, or be able to stand in the day of final decision.

4th. The manifestation of much zeal in the things of religion, for a time, will not be sufficient to give peace in a dying hour, and to secure the everlasting rewards of the righteous. We sometimes behold persons who are all engagedness in the things of religion, and whose whole souls apparently are devoted to the cause of Christ. Their conversation and walk appear marked with zeal for the defence of truth; and like David, they may pray seven times a day. In the view of their devotedness and eminently pious lives, even old professors, who are persevering Christians, are ashamed of themselves and their deficient performances. But, suppose such persons draw back, and forsake all their religious ways; and perhaps lead a life of evident insensibility? What shall we conclude concerning persons of such a character? The Saviour has said concerning such, No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven. However serious minded any person may be; and however animated may be his conduct in the things of religion, if he persevere not in the ways of well-doing, he is essentially defective. His piety is far too short, and greatly straitened. Concerning every one that turneth back from attention to religious duties, the Lord declares, My soul shall have no pleasure in him. Moreover, the scriptures do make mention of some, who draw back unto perdition. From the parable concerning the way-side and stony ground hearers of the word, we are taught, That some give attention to the things of religion for a while, whose hearts are never renewed by grace. And it is possible for such

to go great lengths both in their feelings and in the external duties of religion, and yet not be the children of God. Persons deceiving, or being themselves deceived, may engage in all the active forms of religion, as well as those who are the true disciples of Christ. Where a good work is begun in the heart, such an one's religion is not for a week, month, or year, but for life; yea, and for eternity. Hence we are taught, He that persevereth unto the end, the same shall be saved. To forsake evil ways, is well; and to attend to external duties, is well. But the question, Whether we have passed from death unto life? is an infinitely important one. Unless this be the case, we are unprepared for a dying hour and to enjoy the company of the blessed for eternity. Delusion, false religion, or a heated imagination is temporary: and the end is uneasiness and distress. But true religion is peaceable, permanent, and purifying; and its reward, is glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. May not our religion be like the morning cloud and early dew, which soon pass away. May it be like that of the just, which groweth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day; and which will be perfected until the day of Jesus Christ.

REFLECTIONS.

1st. In the light of this subject we may see how vain are all our attainments and enjoyments, if we embrace a false religion. What will it avail to be surrounded with friends and relatives, to be raised to eminence on the account of abilities and qualifications, and to be crowned with prosperity and affluence all our days, if we live without God and a well grounded hope in the world; and after death, be wretched for ever? If any one should gain the whole world and lose his soul, would he be a gainer, or rather would he not be an infinite loser? Health and wealth, pleasure and honour, refinement and grandeur, are mere vanity and snares to our souls, if for

the enjoyment of them, we be deceived respecting our immortal interests. Whatever may be our attainments or enjoyments, we are, according to the true import of the text, poor and wretched, and blind, and naked, if we obtain not the pearl of great price. Whatever we possess, if our hearts be not renewed by grace, and our sins pardoned through the blood of Christ, of all men we shall be the most miserable. But mankind may be poor, be deprived of many of the comforts of life; and yet come short of durable riches, of a heavenly and eternal inheritance. Poverty or afflictions are of no avail as a substitute for genuine religion, nor can they give a title to heaven. Whether we possess or enjoy little or much of the good things of this life, unless Christ be formed in us the hope of glory, our portion must be with the nations that forget God.

2d. By contrast we may see, that goodly are the prospects of those who are rich in faith, though poor, destitute, and afflicted in this present state. In the world to which they are going, sin, nor sorrow, nor sighing ever enter; but joy and triumph will there for ever reign. What a consolation to the afflicted and distressed, who can entertain the cheering hope that death will for ever end their sorrows, and be the gate of their entrance into that happy place, where are joys unspeakable and full of glory! Do they now weep on the account of sin and the calamities of life? Shortly they will rejoice, and join in the everlasting praises and anthems of the blessed. What a privilege, what an unspeakable blessing! that those who have a scanty portion here, a mere subsistence mingled with a few comforts, may have the Lord for their reconciled God, and heaven for their eternal home. Yes, and they who abound in every thing that is dear under the sun, if they set their affections on things above, will at last walk the golden streets of the New-Jerusalem. If they use this world as not abusing it, the world above will be their everlasting

portion. But suppose it is literally true concerning any one, that the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower, than that he can wrap himself in it. How happy for that man if the moral or figurative import of the words, be not applicable to him.

3d. We may conclude, that the gospel is suited to every disposition or circumstance in life; and calculated to render all who embrace it happy. Are any of peculiarly tender feelings and delicate sensibility, and are they timid and distrustful of themselves? The influence of the gospel would serve to establish their minds with Christian fortitude; and render their faith firm, and their hopes in the Lord strong. But, are any pained with insensibility of affection, and with an unfeeling and sceptical mind? The grace and mercy of God are peculiarly calculated to fill their souls with contrition; and to awaken them to all that is endearing or interesting. Through the light of the gospel, the moralist may have all the moral virtues carried to their highest perfection, whilst he is made wise unto salvation. The profane and profligate will become moral and godly, and bless the Father of all mercies for all their comforts, if they will only hearken to the voice of wisdom. The intemperate will become sober minded, and lead godly lives, if they resist not the light and power of the gospel. The wandering may be led into the right way; and the blind receive their sight, from the anointing with that eye salve, which the gospel offers freely. Then let us not be deceived in concerns of the utmost importance, by fearing to come to the light, lest our deeds be reproved. Infinitely better to have our sins set in order continually before our eyes, whilst in time; that we, through the rich grace and mercy of God, may be delivered from them for eternity. *Amen.*

SERMON XVIII.

NEGLECT OF PRESENT DUTY THE RUIN OF MAN.

1 Kings xx. 40.

As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.

VARIOUS and deeply interesting are the instructions of the sacred oracles. The revelation which God has given, is both glorious and worthy its author; and suited to the state and condition of mankind. On the one hand, the divine character is exhibited in all its glory and beauty; on the other, that of man in all its pollution and deformity. The great design of divine revelation is the glory of God, and the salvation of man. But, in order to this, we may see the propriety of those facts being recorded of the conduct of both good and bad men; of the faithful and unfaithful, and all their varied circumstances, to be a terrour to evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. Hence, a passage of scripture seemingly indifferent in itself, by its connexion becomes momentously interesting.

The words of the text are the account of a man's negligence, which cost his life. The connexion, is solemn and instructive. And a certain man of the sons of the prophets, said unto his neighbour in the word of the Lord, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him. Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the Lord, Behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him and slew him. Then he found another man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee; And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded

him. So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face. And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king; and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle, and behold, a man turned aside and brought a man unto me and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver. And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgement be, thyself hast decided it. And he hasted and took the ashes away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him, that he was of the prophets. And he said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.

By this account we are taught, that to be busy about remote concerns, to the neglect of immediate duty, proves the destruction of man. The subject may be illustrated with great variety for our present and future well-being.

1st. As it respects the various evils of civil life, the true reason to be assigned, is, that mankind are so much busied in concerns remote from their present duty. Society is burdened by manifold evils, because so many are busy here and there; and for the greater part of their time, and the chief part of their conduct, no satisfactory account can be given. Mankind are generally busied about something; and if it be not for good, it must be for ill. Those pursuits which cannot be for the benefit of individuals and community, must be for their injury. And to turn aside but one step from what is consistent with known duty, is to enter a course which may end in lasting disgrace and infamy. When the mind is not employed with subjects which relate to immediate duty, a person is peculiarly exposed to temptation.

To be busy here and there, by spending much of our time in loitering or frivolous pursuits, is to be in danger of some destructive vice; of intemperance, profanity, theft, or lasciviousness: and to an unfeeling mind and abandoned life. Would all be occupied in some of the varied duties of life, how quickly would bitter animosities, and painful and lasting contentions have an end. Why are our prisons filled with malefactors? Because many are busy here and there, contemplating schemes to which duty does not call, and inventing projects which are not their true interest. Forgery and robbery so often take place on the account of some who would be busy, but not in some honest calling. Why are locks necessary? For fear that some would be busy here and there, from motives foreign from present duty. The same reasoning will account for the conduct of duelists. Would the person on the gallows assign the true reason and first cause how he came to ascend the scaffold to be a spectacle for the world, he would tell us he first embarked in some trivial pursuits, aside from the path of duty; and, persisting in this course by a climax of vices, he is suspended between the heavens and earth. Murder, at first, was far from his intentions; his soul even shuddered at the thought of a profligate life, and of abandoned and desperate attempts. How varied the vices and evils of this present world! But to be busy about remote concerns to the neglect of immediate duty, proves the destruction of man in his present state, as it respects the various evils of social and civil life.

2d. Negligence and trivial pursuits, instead of industry and economy, cause many to live in the want of the conveniences of life. Earthly good things must not be accounted our chief portion, as they are only the temporal blessings of heaven. Still no person of reflection can be insensible how desirable and necessary they are in this life, both for

usefulness and comfort. Although they are only temporal gifts, yet they are essential for our subsistence and for the support of society. Hence, then, we are not only to desire them; but to labour, and by all prudent means, endeavour to procure them. In time of health property is desirable, that we may have a competence; bear our part in the support of religious institutions, and contribute to the support of the poor and needy, and to the necessities of the sick and distressed. And how culpable must that person be, who by idleness or prodigality, has rendered himself unable to discharge such offices of humanity. Sin lieth at the door of him who will be busy here and there, in pursuits remote and inconsistent with his worldly interest. If the time and means for accumulating earthly goods be mispent, how can we comply with the kind exhortation, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness? Without the means of relieving the necessities of the afflicted, how can we succour them? To endure a distressing and lingering sickness, or to bear the infirmities peculiar to old age, and at the same time to be destitute of the comforts and aids requisite to such a state, through former indolence or extravagance, must fill the mind with keen reflection and painful reproaches. Youth is the season peculiarly favourable to a preparation and beginning, to accumulate the varied blessings of life. But parents, who are the instruments of bringing their children into the world, are bound to make suitable provision for their several wants. Hence says the apostle Paul, The children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. Instead of this, however, we behold some profusely squander wealth, and waste their fortunes; and others, who are too indifferent to exert themselves for their children's welfare. They are busy here and there; but their daily employments are wholly incompatible with the peace and pros-

perity of their families. How should a parent's heart be pained at the thought of having his children dependant on others for support, when his own misconduct is the chief cause of such dependance. Then may industry and economy witness our conduct; that negligence, indolence, and trivial pursuits may not cause us to live in the want of the comforts and conveniences of life, and prove the ruin of our interests as it respects the temporal blessings of heaven.

3d. Mental improvement forbids, that we be busy about remote concerns, to the neglect of immediate duty. It depends upon our own exertions, whether our minds be employed in treasuring up trivial and vain ideas, or those which are interesting and useful. Some are busy here and there in the pursuit of knowledge, which cannot benefit themselves nor others, instead of that which is worthy to be remembered and communicated. But how important that the several faculties of the mind, be exerted on subjects suited to the dignity of its rational nature, that sensual and sinful thoughts be not intruding. Youth is the season peculiarly favourable to mental improvement; for then, with the growth of the animal frame, the mind is capable of the greatest expansion. If this precious season be unimproved, the intellectual nature must sustain a loss which no future exertions can possibly retrieve. Then may diligence, and a seasonable attention to study and reflection, refine the mind and enlarge the understanding. Let virtuous principles and habits be instilled into the minds of children, lest they indulge in those that are vicious. The mind that is uncultivated, like a field, is liable to be overgrown with thorns and briers; which, when deeply rooted and wide spread, can scarcely be eradicated. May our adorning be that of the inner man, that the mental powers be invigorated and brightened, and not stupified and darkened.

4th. Mankind should not be busy about remote

concerns, to the neglect of present duty, lest they insensibly fall into a state of skepticism and infidelity. Errour is calculated to bewilder the mind, and gradually to efface the impressions of truth. For this reason, young persons should avoid the reading of books of infidelity as they would the poison of asps; and they should turn away from skeptical conversation as from an adder, that would bite them. The allurements of falsehood under the appearance of truth, whether from satan or his agents, will, in the end, bite like a serpent and sting like an adder. But we are apt to be deceived and embrace delusions, when in quest of that knowledge which edifieth not, but puffeth up. Would we conscientiously and prayerfully seek for truth as for hidden treasures, we should be alarmed at the appearance of falsehood and delusion, and contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. To be busy here and there, by reading books, or hearing conversation, which is unprofitable and inconsistent with immediate duty, is one step towards fatal delusion. The conversation of that company which would treat with levity the gospel of Christ, breathes a poison deadly to the soul. Then may we beware and take heed to our ways, that we be not busy about remote concerns, to the neglect of immediate duty, lest infidelity and skepticism prove our ruin.

5th. Mankind should not be busy about remote concerns, to the neglect of immediate duty; but in early life should make religion their main business, or they will experience a great loss through the whole of their existence. Youth is emphatically the golden period of life; and the season peculiarly favourable for obtaining an interest in the rich blessings of the gospel. Then the mind is most susceptible of serious and lasting impressions; and they who seek religion early, are encouraged by promises peculiar to themselves. Habits of resisting the truth and neglecting the various means of grace are not then formed

as in riper years. Those peculiar discouragements and difficulties, which are common to a more advanced life, do not set themselves in array to dissuade from the work. But, alas! how venturesome, if not fatal, to pass this period of existence, and not attend to the one thing needful! The greater part of those who pass the morning of their lives in impenitence, give no evidence, when their sun sets, that they are reconciled to God through the death of his Son. Sad reflection! to be on the decline of life, before the work of eternity is begun! And of the few who are constrained in middle age to walk in newness of life, how are their hearts pained when they reflect, that in their youth they were busy here and there; but were not then immediately and solicitously engaged to secure the salvation of their souls. They grieve and lament, that the bloom of life was spent in the ways of folly and service of Satan; and not in the ways of wisdom, and service of God. And their evidence that they are the subjects of renewing and saving grace, is not generally so firm and bright as that of those, who by a pious and godly life, remember their Creator in the days of their youth. Moreover, a life of early piety and devotedness in the cause of Christ, will reap a more glorious recompense of reward in eternity, than will the mere remains of life spent in his service. This must be true, if the reward be according to the works. A life of engagedness for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, particularly that of youth and health, is more for the honour and glory of God, than it is to serve him only in the decline of life. Then let not youth spend their golden moments in remote concerns in the ways of vanity; but in the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom. Thus may they reap peculiar blessings both in time and in eternity. But if they refuse, they forsake their own mercies; they turn away from their dearest interest. If they neglect immediate duty, for the sake of any

foreign pursuit, they are treasuring up sorrow, and throwing barriers in the way of their own salvation. Let them not be busy about remote concerns, to the neglect of their immortal interest; but in early life make religion their main business, or they will experience a great loss through the whole of their existence.

6th. If believers are busy about remote concerns to the neglect of present duty, they mar their own peace, and pierce themselves with many sorrows. As an encouragement for them to abound in every Christian duty, the joys of religion are in proportion to their faithfulness. They who daily keep the great end of their calling and profession in view, by their walking with God, anticipate some of the joys of heaven upon earth. But as a chastisement for unfaithfulness, they that wander feel the rod. They who are busy here and there, in some pursuit remote from duty, do not experience the smile, but the frown of heaven. Like rebellious Israel of old, some who profess the gospel of Christ, seem bent on going astray and backsliding. But such not only blight their fair prospects, but render their path a dreary wilderness, instead of that of the just, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Instead of their candle shining with the blaze as of noon day, it scarcely appears as the dim light of a taper. When believers are watchful and faithful, their souls enjoy a feast of fat things. But when they depart from the law of life, they wander over barren mountains or sandy deserts, where are no cooling shades nor living springs. How chilled the affections, how formal the conversation and sad the experience of believers, who leave their first love, and neglect their immediate duty.

7th. If believers are busied about remote concerns to the neglect of present duty, they are in danger of falling into grievous sins. The renewal of the heart by grace, is no security against sin; without resisting temptation, and watching unto prayer. Although

saints are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation; yet they must watch and pray, and attend to their immediate duty, lest they step into some forbidden path, and greatly dishonour his name. Noah, the preacher of righteousness, busied about remote concerns, falls into shameful intoxication. Moses, the meekest of men, the moment he neglects present duty, speaks unadvisedly and wickedly with his lips. Aaron, the priest, straying step by step, is persuaded to make a golden calf. The prophet Jonah, turning aside from duty, attempts to flee from the presence of his Maker; and after a merciful deliverance, he replies with presumption. David, the man after God's own heart, forgetting his honour and duty, commits adultery and then is guilty of murder. Peter, the ready follower of Christ, by turning aside a little, unexpectedly, with an oath denies his Lord and master. What stains in these characters! What dishonour to the cause of religion! And would believers at the present day, not wound their own souls and the cause which they have espoused, by some heinous transgression, let them be careful not to neglect their immediate duty.

8th. To be busy about remote concerns, to the neglect of present duty, proves the final destruction of many of the human race. Mankind have immortal souls committed to their care, which they are forbidden to neglect upon the pain of death. They, who are busy here and there, till they loose their souls, will experience an irreparable loss. As the man was unable to pay the talent of silver as a ransom for his life, so they will ever be unable to pay the uttermost farthing, or to redeem their souls from the curse of the law. Although heaven is at an infinite remove in consequence of sin; yet, through the atonement of Christ, and the means of grace, it is possible to be obtained. Notwithstanding, it may be lost; and some, instead of eternal life, reap eternal death. Not only open vice, but the neglect of im-

mediate duty, the neglect of the great salvation, proves the final ruin of many. Let us again call to mind the words of the text. And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. It does not appear, that he was busy in sinful or unlawful pursuits. But he neglected safely to guard and keep the one delivered into his custody; and for the safe keeping and delivery of whom, he was responsible, even at the expense of his own life. Whilst he was engaged in other pursuits of less solemn importance; the prisoner made his escape. Just so many lose their souls by seeking mere trifles, instead of striving to enter in at the strait gate. Instead of engaging with seriousness in immediate duty, which is of infinite moment; they would be busy here and there in remote concerns, till they think it a convenient season. The gospel is committed to them; and they are charged to keep it unto the day of Jesus Christ. But when the Holy Spirit urges to immediate duty, whether of repentance, prayer, or perseverance, how do some resort to remote concerns? perhaps to a social circle, a pleasing anecdote, or some novel. Instead of making the word of God their guide, they follow the fancies of a lively imagination. In times of general awakenings, whilst some engage with all diligence, through divine grace, to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling; others, with unremitting perseverance, work out their own destruction. They suffer some pursuit, remote from the great end of their being, to engage their attention, till death comes upon them unawares, and they are destroyed suddenly, and that without remedy. Thus their souls are gone; gone to the region of darkness and the perdition of the ungodly. Would they in time have laid their dearest interest to heart, they would not, with consternation in eternity, lament their criminal neglect. How solemn the fact! how alarming the truth! that the being busy about remote concerns, to the neglect of present

duty, proves the final destruction of many of the human race.

IMPROVEMENT.

1st. This subject naturally suggests the inquiry to each one of us; Where am I, what am I doing, and whither am I going? Am I at my proper place or station in the pursuit of secular concerns, and attendance on religious duties? Am I engaged in those pursuits which become a rational, accountable, and immortal being? Am I travelling in the straight and narrow way of immediate duty which leadeth to life, or in the broad road of remote concerns, which leads to death.

2d. We may see how important it is to shun the very appearance of evil. To resist the first risings of temptation, is easy; but to parley with the tempter, till by his wiles he place his fascinating baits, and exhibit sin in all its deceitful and alluring charms, is dangerous and yielding to his power. Thus the soul is led his willing captive. As birds exposed to the fascinations of a serpent, if they first take the alarm, they make their escape. But, if they listen to his deadly wiles and fatal enchantments, instead of flying away, they first make excentrick flights; next come near and hover around him, then lose the power of flight; and with a few feeble flutters, fall a victim to their devouring enemy. So is it delusive and deadly to the soul to give heed to the suggestions of satan, and not resist his deadly cunning and delusive schemes, when first perceived. At first, resistance is not difficult; but if we hearken to the great deceiver as to some kind angel, we fall a prey to his delusions and power.

3d. We may behold the astonishing goodness and compassion of God, in giving a divine revelation to man. The sacred volume not only makes known that the door of heaven is opened for lost man; but with the most friendly cautions and warnings, it

reveals the hidden dangers which beset the heavenly road. In tender mercy, counsels of wisdom and salutary admonitions are given, that the wandering may return, and their souls find rest. No suitable instruction is withheld; and all that is encouraging and endearing, invites us to walk in the way of salvation.

4th. This subject presents every possible encouragement to attend to the concerns of immediate duty. This is the proper way to secure the comforts of this life, and to promote our present peace and highest enjoyment upon earth. Present duty is immediately and inseparably connected with the dearest interest of our fellow-men, and by reciprocation to double our own joys. And as to those joys which are on high, the faithful discharge of our duty towards God and man, will reap endless and increasing felicity. The evils of life, and those of futurity forbid us to be busy about remote concerns. But cheering prospects for time, and unspeakable blessings for eternity, are the reward of well doing; and call, invite, and allure, that our employments and enjoyments, be in attending to the concerns of immediate duty and preparing for immortal glory. *Amen.*

SERMON XIX.

THE PATH OF HUMAN HAPPINESS.

Psalm iv. 6.

There be many that say, Who will show us any good?

THE desire of happiness is connatural to the minds of intelligent beings. All men wish to be happy, notwithstanding so many pursue courses which are inconsistent with the attainment of this desirable end. Whether mankind be holy or sinful; whether they walk in the straight and narrow way that leadeth to life, or in the broad road that leads to death, they are inquiring after happiness. This is an object truly worthy of their pursuit, and there is but one higher or more noble motive which can inspire the human breast. Moral fitness, or the seeking to know and do the will of God so as to promote the greatest good of his moral kingdom, is the most glorious principle, by which man can be excited to action. Such a sentiment and excitement are the dignity of human nature; and a royal diadem to crown the head of man. But all are not thus nobly influenced. The Psalmist says, There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Perhaps the true import of this expression is, Many inquire after happiness, without knowing what it is, or seeking where it may be found. They may desire any enjoyments of a worldly and sensual nature, and be willing to pursue any means or courses in order to self gratification. Such would delight in any object or pursuit, that would afford sinful pleasures. The inquiry may be, What earthly or created good, when rightly pursued, will promote human happiness. Some, when

they make the inquiry, Who will show us any good? would convey this idea, That none but God can satisfy and fill the desires of an immortal mind.

In the prosecution of this subject, my object will be to point out the path of human happiness. In the world above, all are completely happy; but in the present state, happiness is variously distributed, and in general according to the propriety and uprightness of conduct. Hence the present and future prospects of human beings depend much upon themselves, or upon a wise and faithful improvement of means and talents. But suffer me first to present the reader with some observations from Sterne, on the same subject.

The great pursuit of man is happiness, which is the first and strongest desire of his nature. In every stage of his life he searches for it, as for hid treasure. He courts it under a thousand different shapes; and though perpetually disappointed, still persists, runs, and inquires for it afresh; asks every passenger, who comes in his way, Who will show him any good? who will assist him in the attainment of it, or direct him to the discovery of this great end of all his wishes?

He is told by one, to search for it amongst the more gay and youthful pleasures of life; in scenes of mirth and sprightliness, where happiness ever presides, and is ever to be known by the joy and laughter which he will see, at once, painted in her looks.

A second, with a graver aspect, points to the costly dwellings which pride and extravagance have erected; tells the inquirer that the object of which he is in search, resides there; that happiness lives only in company with the great, in the midst of much pomp and outward state; that he will easily find her out by the fineness, richness, and costliness of her dress; and by the great luxury, the expense of equipage and furniture, with which she is always surrounded.

The miser blesses God; wonders how any one would mislead and wilfully put him upon so wrong a path; is convinced that happiness and extravagance never dwelt under the same roof; that if he would not be disappointed in his search, he must look into the plain and thrifty dwelling of the prudent man, who knows and understands the worth of money, and cautiously lays it up against an evil day. He is persuaded that it is not the prostitution of wealth upon the passions, or the parting with it at all, that constitutes happiness; but that it is the keeping of it together, and the having and holding of it fast to him and his heirs for ever, which are the chief attributes that form this great idol of human worship, to which so much incense is offered up every day.

The epicure, though he easily rectifies so gross a mistake, yet at the same time, he plunges him, if possible, into a greater; for, hearing the object of his pursuit to be happiness, and knowing of no other enjoyment than what is seated immediately in the senses; he sends the inquirer there, tells him it is in vain to search for it elsewhere, than where nature herself has placed it, even in the indulgence and gratification of the appetites, which are given us for that end. And in a word, if he will not take his opinion in the matter, he may trust the word of a much wiser man; who has assured us, that there is nothing better in this world than that a man should eat and drink and rejoice in his works, and make his soul enjoy good in his labour for that is his portion.

But, to rescue him from this sensual experiment, ambition takes him by the hand, leads him forth into the world, shows him all the kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them; points out the many ways of advancing his fortune, and raising himself to honour; lays before his eyes all the charms and bewitching temptations of power; and then asks, if

there can be any happiness in this life like that of being caressed, courted, flattered, and followed?

To close all, the philosopher meets him bustling in the full career of this pursuit; stops him, tells him if he is in search of happiness, he is far gone out of his way. The fullest assurance is given that this goddess has long been banished from noise and tumults, where no rest could be found for her; has fled into solitude, far from all commerce of the world. In a word, if he would find her, he must leave this busy and intriguing theatre, and go back to that peaceful scene of retirement and books from which he at first set out. Alas! how often does man run the round of this circle? Try all experiments, and generally sit down weary and dissatisfied with them all at last; in utter despair of ever accomplishing what he wants, nor knowing to what to trust after so many disappointments, or where to lay the fault; whether in the incapacity of his own nature, or the insufficiency of the enjoyments themselves.

In this uncertain and perplexed state, without knowledge which way to turn, or where to betake ourselves for refuge; so often abused and deceived by the many who pretend thus to do good, Lord, says the Psalmist, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us. That is, send us some rays of thy grace and heavenly wisdom, in this benighted search after happiness, to direct our goings in the sure path. O! let us not wander for ever without a guide in this dark region, in endless pursuit of our mistaken good; but enlighten our eyes that we sleep not in death. Open to them the comforts of thine holy word and religion; lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, and make us know the joy and satisfaction of living in the true faith and fear of Thee, which alone can carry us to this haven of rest where true joys are to be found; and which will at length not only answer all our expectations, but satisfy the most unbounded of our wishes for ever and ever.

Having selected these interesting remarks, let us now attend directly to the inquiry and examination of the present subject; which will lead us in the right way in our pursuit after happiness, as we are instructed from the oracles of divine truth.

1st. The restraining and governing of unruly passions, is a necessary step for those that would be happy. The active principles of human nature, if they be in subordination and properly exercised, become springs to exertion and sources of enjoyment; but, if they be unrestrained and rage with violent impulse, they will render a man wretched. To have the government of one's self, is to lead a peaceable and quiet life, and enjoy a serene day; but the man who does not restrain himself from sinful passions, is like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. Says Solomon in his Proverbs, he that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down and without walls. Such an one is liable to be overcome by every enemy; for he is exposed to constant assaults and has his mind continually ruffled. How does every malicious man disturb his own peace, and become a wretched prey to every designing intruder. Whilst others are fanned by a pleasant gale, and cheered by the gentle zephyrs, he is tossed by the surges of a boisterous ocean. A person who gives loose reins, to a spirit of jealousy, is disturbed at every thing he sees or hears; and the sweets of life are embittered to his taste, and converted into the most baneful poison. The envious man, how is he prepared to be wretched; though the means of happiness abound within his reach. He pines in secret, blights his own fair prospects, and becomes his own tormenter. The passionate man, every idle word throws into a phrensy, and agitates his passions like the tumult of an assaulted city. Regardless of reputation, character, or friendship, he scatters around him fire-brands, arrows, and death. Unrestrained passions, and violent

inclinations, acquire strength, and soon hurry their wretched victim, with an almost irresistible force, to the quicksands and whirlpools of death. On the other hand, what greatness of soul for a man to have the rule over his own spirit! The victory over one's self is a conquest immensely more important and glorious than that of conquering armies and subduing kingdoms. Some persons are doubtless more exposed to temptation from the passions, than others; but to such, especially, does the exhortation apply with force, To keep the heart with all diligence, and set a double guard over the tongue, that they may be the issues of life. Let human beings so command themselves and regulate the active principles of their nature, to the end for which they were implanted; which is, to promote individual and general happiness.

2d. They who would promote human happiness, must not yield to the excessive indulgence of appetite. A man may be a glutton as well as a drunkard. Probably as many indulge in excessive eating in their daily food, as do in the excessive drinking of spirituous liquors; and perhaps the consequences are as extensively sad and ruinous. By frequent excesses in eating, no doubt thousands and thousands have been thrown into a violent fever and brought to an untimely grave. From the same cause, perhaps, a still greater number have fallen into other diseases which have preyed upon their vitals; and by a gradual, yet fatal pace, have greatly shortened their days. Every gluttonous person gradually enervates his body; greatly beclouds and enfeebles all the powers of his mind; brings on himself a heavy stupor and strange stupidity. Gluttony blunts all the tender and interesting feelings of a human being, and bars all the noble avenues of a refined sensibility. In addition to the varied and lasting diseases both of body and mind, which it entails upon its miserable subjects, it draws them into the sad habits of inac-

tivity and idleness, which are the parents, the nurseries, and fore-runners of the most pernicious vices and the most degrading crimes. If a person eat to excess but seldom, or even but once, he destroys his own comfort, sins against God, and wounds both soul and body. How does excessive eating render a person unfit for rational reflection! what an enemy to cheerfulness and mental improvement! and what a flood-gate to every kind of vain imaginations! How important, then, for those who would regard their own comfort and promote their health, to be constantly temperate in the participation of their daily food. In opposition to the indulgence of gratifying an irregular and vitiated appetite, the word of God teaches, That the righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul. He becomes not a slave to appetite, nor does he satiate and increase sensual cravings; but he exercises reason and judgement concerning the portion or quantity of food, which at any time, may be suitable. Says Solomon in his Proverbs, Put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. This striking caution will serve to evince, that the effects of excessive eating must be most pernicious indeed. But temperance in this respect, is the mother, the nurse, and friend of a constant train of virtuous and rich blessings. How very important then, for the promotion of human happiness, that we be temperate in eating, and not yield to the excessive indulgence of appetite.

3d. The refraining from vicious courses, is necessary to the promotion of human happiness. All those faults and offences, which are opposite to a course of virtue, may be denominated vice. There are some, who shun openly gross and notorious vices; but they practise others, though directly opposed to their own peace. To be guilty of lying, or of telling an untruth, in what some would deem trifling concerns, is a sin against God and man; and cannot but plant thorns in a rational and conscious breast. To cheat or over-

reach a fellow mortal, may afford a momentary pleasure, in view of the dishonest gain; but how often will conscience sting, and render an unhappy one more wretched. To backbite, or speak evil of another, may gratify some sinful disposition; but the mere sight or reflection of the person reviled, will afterwards cause the reviler to be pained with shame and conscious guilt. Profanity, scenes of riot, dissipation, and debauchery, are sins which must now and then pierce the breasts of the guilty, as if a dagger were entering their heart. Let us beware then of every vice. But whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

4th. The forming of early and regular habits, is very important for the promotion of human happiness. By the term habit, is to be understood the power or ability of doing any thing easily and naturally, in consequence of the frequent repetition of the same action. Man is said to be made up of a bundle of habits, and these have a powerful sway either for enjoyment or distress. The habit of industry in some honest calling, or of study in some useful profession, is important for young persons. To be trained up to cleanliness of person, decency of dress, and engaging manners, is certainly worthy of attention. The habit of rising early in the morning, is of vast benefit; as it is so well calculated to promote our daily comfort and prosperity, our health and wealth. Our natural and civil pursuits, all moral virtues and religious duties, may, by frequent and regular repetition, and proper attention, become habitual. Habits of temperance and vigilance, of methodising and reasoning, are very advantageous. The pains and labour bestowed in forming early and noble habits, are thousands of times repaid in this present state

by the pleasure and profit which they produce. How most desirable and essential to human happiness are good habits!

5th. To seek the preservation or promotion of health, is an important step in the path of human happiness. Such is the union of soul and body, and their mutual influence upon each other, that they have constantly mutual sympathies and mutual enjoyments or distresses. Hence it is that the activity and vigour of the body give energy and hilarity to the mind. Bodily health is most closely connected with serenity and joy in the soul. The degree of enjoyment of all things around us, is greatly in proportion to the measure of the health of any person, and the flow of spirits which are a concomitant. How insipid are our lawful pleasures, when the body is enfeebled and in a languishing state. The satisfaction and delight from food and raiment, from the arts and sciences, from friends and relatives, are greatly diminished and dried up, to those who are afflicted with bodily infirmities. The mind is debilitated and prospects blighted, when the corporeal system is diseased and enervated. How careful then should each one be, not to do any thing unnecessarily, or indulge in any pursuit or gratification, that would tend to injure their bodily health, and how readily pursue those methods which are calculated for its preservation and promotion.

6th. An easy and social conversation is very favourable to human happiness. The gift of speech is an inestimable blessing, for the mutual instruction and consolation of the great human family. Parents of a sociable turn, and who are apt to teach, may not only do much for the welfare of their children, but also for their own enjoyment. The instructer of children and youth who delights to communicate useful instruction, not only interests his pupils, but must himself take much satisfaction from his own labours. The minister of the gospel who has the talent of rea-

dily introducing religious conversation, and of comforting the afflicted, must have his own heart gladdened from the benevolent counsels of his own words. Youth, who cultivate an easy, encouraging, and instructive conversation, are not only acceptable and respected by their friends and companions, but they are active in the path of their own happiness. As he that watereth shall himself also be watered; so words fitly spoken, are evidence of a generous breast and joyful heart. As a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, so is it favourable to human happiness for human and social beings to cultivate an easy, social, and instructive conversation.

7th. To cultivate a spirit of contentment is very important for human happiness. The phrase, a contented mind, may be clearly understood, if we consider it as the contrast of a fretful and restless disposition. It depends more on the state of the mind, than on external things, whether a man be contented or discontented with his present lot; or whether he attend to the avocations of life with quietness and content, or with uneasiness and discontent. Persons, who indulge a peevish and fretful disposition, not only render those unhappy around them; but they are constantly rendering themselves miserable. A person's circumstances may be ever so favourable, and his prospects ever so promising; still, if discontent rankle his breast, he is a poor man, for he is an unhappy man. What can wealth, friends, or education avail any one, who has a spirit so uneasy and unhappy as not to be able to enjoy them? The spirit of contentment may be cherished not only in a high but also in a low estate. St. Paul observes, I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. Contentment is for the health of the body, favours cheerfulness of mind, and promotes happiness in every breast, wherever it is found.

8th. To bear afflictions, losses, and bereavements,

with patience and submission, is necessary for them that would promote human happiness. The present probationary state, is a world of trial, of disappointment, of sickness, pain, and separation; and to bear up with manly fortitude under these calamities, is the part of wisdom. When suffering any affliction, to be unsubmissive, and to give up to impatience, is only to add grief to grief, and greatly to enhance our difficulties. When the Lord chastens, to murmur and repine, and to spurn at the rod, is not only a sin, but an aggravation of our own distress. When Job was most grievously afflicted with all the calamities of life, how would he have increased his own burdens, had he been unhumbled, and not submissive to the divine Providence. Some afflictions are very grievous, and may cause human beings to weep bitterly, and fill their souls with anguish; but let them beware, lest their hearts fret against God, and their trials be turned into a judgement and curse. When patience and submission to the divine will are exercised in view of the calamities that fall upon us, they are sanctified, and work out the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Then to bear afflictions, losses, and bereavements, with patience and submission, is necessary for them that would promote human happiness.

9th. Engagedness in the pursuit of some desirable object, tends greatly to the promotion of human happiness. As human beings are made for activity and improvement, so when they are suitably engaged in some useful pursuit, they are cheered and delighted as an encouragement to exertion, and a reward for their labour. Attention to any pursuit or calling, that is innocent and serviceable, is calculated to afford enjoyment; but the more noble the pursuit, or the more extensive the utility of the object of our engagedness, the greater is the prospect in favour of human happiness. The lawful acquisition of property, the education of children, or attention to some

mechanical pursuit, are not only objects for exertion, but the means of enjoyment. Still the framing of wise and wholesome laws, or the projecting some great work for very extensive utility, affords a more ample field for the generous and noble powers of the mind, to be enlarged and delighted. It is by activity and diligence, that any of our talents can be improved, and the happiness of mankind advanced. As many as are the evils which can be enumerated, arising from sloth, so many are the opposite and rich blessings, arising from engagedness in the pursuit of some lawful, desirable, and noble object.

10th. In pointing out the path of human happiness, the last particular is naturally this: Religion is man's highest good. Happiness, consummate and durable, can be found only in the immediate enjoyment of the fountain and source of all excellence. The various particulars which have been noticed, are well calculated to promote true happiness, and wisdom loudly admonishes that we do not lightly esteem them. But still the human soul is capable of soaring after higher objects, and of aspiring after more perfect joys. The prophet Micah, exclaims, He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. Here justice between man and man, is pointed out; mercy is brought to view, to point men as sinners to Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life; and a humble walk with God is to be an evidence of their supreme love to him. Says Solomon, after giving abundant and good instruction, Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. By these words we are taught, that they, who would be truly happy, should not make a selfish inquiry after happiness; but their great inquiry should be, to know and do the will of their Father who is in heaven, as this was the great end of their being, and would raise their

souls to immortal glory. Philosophy will teach men the importance of governing unruly passions; but the spirit of Christ, reigning in the soul, leads to the forgiveness of injuries, and teaches men to be temperate in all things. The religion of Jesus, enables to lead godly lives, and leads to a habit of praying. It has a balm and cordial for the health of the soul, by causing it to hold converse with God as its chief joy. The Apostle Paul observes, That godliness with contentment is great gain. And in the view of his own trials and sufferings with those of his brethren, Christian submission by divine grace, enabled him to say with joyful and triumphant hope, Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal. The one who is rightly engaged in the things of religion, has prospects of happiness far more glorious than can possibly be conceived by the heart of man from any other pursuits or sources. Reason and self interest, may teach the utility of cultivating all the moral virtues; but the gospel infuses those heaven-born graces, which will for ever expand in glory, and produce the rapturous joys of immortality. It is religion, which can give tranquillity in infirmity, can buoy up the soul in the storms of life, and at last safely land it in the heaven of eternal day. This is the one thing needful, which includes all that can be desired by an immortal and ever expanding mind. And it is only this, which can give sufficient peace and consolation in all the trying scenes of life, and cause the soul to triumph over death and hell, and join the innumerable company above. Then may this subject give us enlarged views of ourselves, and excite us duly to reflect on the momentous relations which we sustain. Shall not every one awake, and reflect that he is destined

to eternity; and that if he become a holy being, he is to be associated with angels and seraphs, and admitted into the presence of his God and Saviour to go no more out for ever and ever? Let each one contemplate on the depths of his own immortal mind, and extend his thoughts down the line of endless duration, and inquire what he must be when the sun and stars shall have been blotted out for millions of millions of years; and his capacities of enjoyment or suffering, shall have expanded beyond the present dimensions of the highest seraph. With such reflections as these, may we by divine grace be enabled to pursue the true path of human happiness. *Amen,*

SERMON XX.

LITTLE THINGS MAKE UP THE CHARACTER OF A MAN.

Luke xvi. 10.

He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

THE holy scriptures are a peculiar fund of instruction in concerns both of the smallest and of the greatest moment. They teach the truth in reality, and according to the mind of God; not in appearance, and according to the views of men. And they decide the characters of mankind not merely from their external conduct, but from the motives of their hearts; not from a few splendid or glaring acts, but from the general deportment of life. Hence those exploits which are frequently the astonishment of the world, are of little esteem in the view of God; and on the other hand, a life of piety, of self denial, and devotedness in the ways of godliness, is of much value in his sight, although it obtain not the applauses of men. No doubt there are some, who by their fellow-men are honoured as good and great; but whom, at the same time, the Lord holdeth in abomination. And doubtless some who are thought not worthy to live, and who are accounted as the off-scouring of the earth, will at last shine as stars in the kingdom of God for ever and ever. The words of the text are the inference and declaration of the Saviour concerning the steward, who, for his own worldly interest, had induced his lord's debtors to act dishonestly. And although he is commended as

it respects worldly wisdom or selfish interest; yet, for his dishonest measures, he is condemned as an unfaithful steward. There was a certain rich man which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods. And he called him and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said unto himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do; that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? and he said, An hundred measures of oil: and he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he unto another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

These words teach us, that little things make up the character of a man, and are a proper criterion, by which mankind are denominated either good or bad, faithful or unfaithful.

This truth might be extensively illustrated from natural objects, or the works of nature. The immensity of the divine works is composed of parts; or in other words, innumerable worlds constitute the universe. This material world is composed of elements; and even particles of matter comprise the

whole. The face of nature, when exhibiting its most beautiful scenery, is unbounded and infinitely diversified; yet spires of grass, plants, and leaves of trees are the component parts. We sometimes behold the heavens overspread with clouds; but their substance is mists, or vapours of the air. Rivers, rills, and even springs may be considered as the fountains of the mighty deep; for the whole ocean is formed by drops of water. Storms of snow and hail, and the falling showers give demonstration to our senses, that all things in nature are made up of little things. The subject might be pursued in this manner, to great extent; but calculated to please, rather than to benefit mankind, as their own experience would not be brought immediately to the test. This discourse should be of such a nature as to make the hearers feel themselves deeply interested, and should serve as a glass into which they may look, and discern their true characters whether good or bad. And for this purpose let us bear in mind, that a few acts, although they be laudable, conspicuous, and brilliant, are not sufficient to establish an upright and excellent character; neither are a few misdeeds, although known to the world, sufficient to destroy an established Christian character. For example, a life prostituted to vicious courses, cannot be denominated a virtuous one, merely from a few acts of humanity, generosity, or patriotism. On the other hand, some of the worthies, recorded in scripture, who fell into temptation and grievous sins, did not destroy their religious character, although they brought a stain on their good profession. Suppose a person of sober habits fall into the sin of intoxication but once or twice during his life; this will not fix on him the character of a drunkard. Neither will he, on the other hand, who is addicted to lying, if he occasionally speak the truth, be denominated a person of veracity. Greatly to extol any person, because a few things are eminently in his favour, and to pro-

nounce such an one upright on the account of these, when other circumstances are not correspondent, discovers weakness of mind, and a want of a knowledge of the world, and of the word of God. Neither should we be hasty to condemn any one as possessing a bad character, because some faults appear; but should learn his varied deportment, especially his daily walk, would we form an opinion concerning his true worth.

1st. *Little things make up the character of a man, as it respects the common conduct and affairs of life.* Some persons with great activity, occasionally exert themselves and effect much in the course of a day; but this does not entitle them to the character of industry, although they be applauded, for performing unparalleled labours, or effecting wondrous exploits. But, if a person be daily and perseveringly engaged in some useful occupation; although he be able to accomplish but little, he is justly called an industrious man. Sometimes acts of enterprise make a man wealthy; and at once, secure a fortune. But generally to accumulate property little by little, is the manner by which we are to obtain the character of faithful stewards in the good things of this life, and to have economy and frugality witness our daily conduct. Again: little things will render a man a prodigal and spendthrift. Prodigality, which like a flood, desolates the best of farms, and buries in sad ruins large estates, is frequently made up of little things, perhaps not larger than half gills. Negligence and wastefulness in matters of small moment, will soon arise to a great and sad amount. Very few, at one hazardous blow, lavish an estate; but thousands squander away their substance insensibly and their little excesses, like a moth, consume all they possess. It is a common proverb, Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves. So the wasting of cents, is the consumption of thousands of dollars. Thus the present prospects of a man,

whether goodly or sad, depend generally on little things, which serve to form his character.

2d. *Little things make up the character of mankind as honest or dishonest.* For illustration let a few examples be taken. Suppose a merchant set an unreasonable price on some articles, with which the buyer is not acquainted. He is a cheat; for his store is opened with an implicit promise of dealing fairly and honourably. He might as well, by slight of hand, take money from a person's pocket without his knowledge. Let him so adjust his weights, that he will fraudulently save but half a penny weight on each pound he weighs, he is a dishonest man. He needs not be chargeable with open injustice, or cheating by the gross, in order to establish his true character; for he makes this up by little things. But this same person would defraud others of large sums, could he over-reach them and not be detected. And if he be not dishonest in concerns of large amount, the true reason is, not that he is not a dishonest character, but because he believes such a course of dishonest dealing, would not in the end, so well answer his unlawful gain. This is the true import of the expression, He that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. Take by contrast, one who is conscientiously honest in all the smaller concerns and pursuits of life, and the same principle will lead him to uprightness when matters of much importance are presented before him. For it is equally true, he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much. Let a silversmith knowingly defraud those of whom he buys or to whom he sells, of only one cent on a dollar, or an ounce of old silver, he stamps his own character with dishonesty. But let him fear dishonest gain in trivial concerns; and he will not dare attempt it in those which are weighty. Suppose that a farmer, in every half bushel of grain or other things, that he buys or sells, wrongs another of only one gill. This may be called a trifling dis-

honesty; but as little as it is, the words of the text announce it to be the true standard of his character. Not only are false weights, false measures, and a false balance, an abomination to the Lord; but also trifling and designed errours, when we have those which are true. Suppose a minister of the gospel preach the truth clearly and forcibly, with wisdom and faithfulness; but that he lead not a life of piety, nor seeks to follow the directions which he gives to others. He is not only inconsistent, but doubly dishonest. A striking discourse, or a splendid appearance on the Sabbath, will not avail as a substitute for the smaller or more private duties of the week. Let these few examples serve as glasses for persons of every trade, pursuit, and profession, into which they may look, and discern their true character. The application is easy; and that we examine and judge ourselves by little things, is of vast importance. We need not be deceived, nor seek for great things, in order to tell what manner of spirit we possess; for little things are the criterion, which decide the character of a man.

3d. Little things may make up the character of a defamer or slanderer. The tongue is a little member and it needs not utter great words, nor very bitter sayings, in order to do much injury. Persons may be free from open railing slander, and by discourses of surmises and curious inquiries, most effectually defame their neighbours. There are some who profess a tenderness for the character of others, and who, by their insinuations, aim to cast a reproach upon their good name. They would not be seen railing against them on publick occasions; but in the presence of a few, they are ever ready to express their doubts and fears concerning them. They give caution not to have their remarks spread, under pretence that they would not wish to injure them; but in reality, that they may sheath a dagger in their hearts. In many instances, the secret whispers and slanders of

an envious tongue, are more pernicious than open and rank defamation. They are like a poisonous and deadly serpent, which is more to be dreaded, when concealed under the grass, than in an open field. Persons of uprightness and integrity, stand secure from open and virulent attacks; but what can secure from secret aspersions, uttered with the spirit of satan, and clothed with the appearance of an angel? Who does not know that hints, surmises, and doubtful inquiries, though little things, are most fatal weapons? Let whisperers and backbiters, talebearers and busybodies, yea and all of us, remember that flagrant expressions are not necessary and essential to slander; but that little things, may most effectually make up the character of a defamer.

4th. A moral and amiable character is made up of little things; which consists simply in rendering to all, their dues. It is but a little thing that some be acknowledged as superiours, and honoured according to the dignity of their station, and the excellence of their character. The same courteous and friendly treatment, which we may reasonably expect from our equals, is an easy rule to regulate our conduct towards them; and we need not call it too small a thing, or esteem it beneath us, to pay proper attention to those whom we consider our inferiours. The parental character is made up of a train of little things, of varied and repeated acts, which are the natural result of parental affection. It is certainly a great work to train up a child in the way he should go; and it is equally true, that little things, in due season, are sufficient to effect this. The duty of a child towards his parents, does not consist in great, but in little things. All the social duties may be comprised in seasonable attention and suitable conversation, and demand not brilliant talents nor extraordinary exertions. The character of the charitable man, is not formed from bestowing large sums; but from his rea-

diness to relieve and assist, little by little, according as situations and circumstances require. A little seasonable aid and a few salutary directions, may be of much avail to the poor, and to those who stand in need of counsel. A friend in need, is a friend in deed; and a word fitly spoken, is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. As it respects the various offices, relations, and duties of this present life, we may do much good, if we seasonably attend to what may be called little things.

5th. The character of a patriot or hero of a nation, is most thoroughly established by little things. When we hear of the wondrous exploits and successes of any man, what a jewel is set in his character, if his private life and secret walk correspond to the dignity of his elevated station! Is Washington the glory of our nation, as he is the father of our country? How is his character exalted and dignified from the account of his servant, respecting his daily deportment, especially that of stated secret prayer, when he would withdraw to kneel before his Maker in his closet, to implore his guidance and blessing. General La Fayette is extolled as an American hero. But the generality do not consider that he embarked not to regain his own liberty, but ours; and that in our infant state, he sacrificed his property, though little did he expect a rich reward at this day. On the other hand, the character of Alexander the Great, appears small when we turn to the effeminacy and latter end of his life. The brilliant and successful exploits of any man are most glorious, as it respects his good name, when they are supported by the little things pertaining to his life, which add excellence to fame. How desirable that they who would render their names immortal amongst men, be found faithful in that which is least, that their memory be perpetuated in realms above. A few memorable events in any person's life, will not prove an equivalent or com-

pensation for the defects of the many little things which are the true standard and criterion, of which the characters even of great men are made up.

6th. Little things must make up the character of most men, as few have capacity or opportunity for great and noble enterprises. Comparatively few of the human race, are gifted with extraordinary natural powers of mind; and fewer still, have all the advantages which are necessary to cultivate them to their greatest extent. Of the few able and eminent men which at any time live, how small is the number of those, who in the whole course of their lives, have opportunity of doing what the world would call great things. A mere trifling number can be the monuments of history, and the astonishment of ages; for the principal part live and die in obscurity. They have not the power of being distinguished in their whole lives by any great and glorious work, or noble enterprise, consequently their memory is lost in oblivion at death. Ten thousand times ten thousand human beings are never known beyond the neighbourhood in which they are born. Many are brought up in the most lamentable ignorance, and scarcely ever hear of doings beyond their own town or vicinity. Concerning such it is emphatically true, that little things make up their character; for their means of knowledge, ideas, and opportunities of doing good, are greatly limited. But whether they improve the talents they have, whether they are faithful or unfaithful according to their means and opportunities, is their important concern. Such persons do form characters either good or bad, and they are interested in this subject as well as others; for it teaches simple truth: He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

7th. *Little things make up the character of a man as a Christian, and will be the criterion by which, at the last great day, sentence will be pronounced for eternity.* The

words of the text will be the test as a trial or standard, by which we must be judged; but the sentence to be pronounced will be a little varied, he that is unjust let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still: Then a life of piety, though in a corner of obscurity and shrouded in abject poverty, will shine conspicuous, and out dazzle all the pomp and grandeur of this world. Self denial, meekness, and charity, will be most brilliant gems in the heavenly crown. The sceptres and badges of kings and princes, of popes and emperours, will fade away and shrivel as a scroll, when compared with those little things, which will serve to show that a man is found faithful in that which is least. Let us then now realize the true import of the saying of the Saviour to his disciples: Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily, I say unto you, He shall not lose his reward. And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. Let not the account of that little sum, two mites, which the poor widow cast into the treasury, be forgotten nor despised by us. Though a little thing, it is recorded for instruction, and has a direct bearing on our character. Perhaps some would hope for divine approbation, neither from great nor little things; but from neutral ground, or not openly opposing religion. Let me draw an arrow from the divine quiver, sharpened and made ready by the blessed Redeemer. He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad. I see another character of quite a different form. It is one who glories in a wonderful conversion, like that of the apostle Paul. The heavens seemed opened, and the angels of God, and the Son of man, appeared in all their glory.

But, friend, have you none of those little things which are credentials, essential to a Christian character? Oh no! I think it not worthy to trouble myself about such things. My past conversion is all I ask, to make my calling and election sure; and a life of godliness would be an intolerable cross to me. Alas deluded man! Satan has appeared to you transformed into an angel of light; and if you do not yet repent, and begin to walk in newness of life, he will meet you at last in the clouds of the air, and drag you down to the region of despair. The secret motives of the heart, words, and retired places for prayer, will be sources of joy to some and of consternation to others. Let us recollect that Naaman, the Syrian leper, was not required to do some great thing in order to effect his cure. Then let us take the simple and only safe means which God has given, to save from hell and raise to heaven. If we seek to do great things and for these to be saved, we die; but if we neglect not those little things, which the word of life points out as essential to our forming a Christian character, we live. Yes, live in glorious immortality, when these heavens and this earth shall be no more.

REFLECTIONS.

1st. In the light of this subject we may see, that our great concern should not be to know what the world may think of us; but how we are esteemed in the sight of God. It is desirable to have the good opinion of others; and earthly friends in this pilgrimage state, are important. If an upright and courteous conduct will secure the esteem of our fellow-men, we should endeavour to obtain their good opinion, that we may be the more useful. Still we should not seek to be men-pleasers, but the servants of God. And when our name is evil spoken of, when our motives and character are questioned by others, our solicitations should be to obtain the ap-

probation of the Searcher of hearts. Our fellow-mortals may be deceived, or from some evil design may judge us uncharitably; but it will be a strong consolation, if the Lord, who cannot err, smile upon us. Better to have all the world in hostile array against us, and to suffer the most bitter persecution, if we have heaven on our side, than to please all men, and not be the servants of Christ. As it is desirable to have the friendship, sympathies, and aids of our fellow-mortals, so it is infinitely important to have that communion, and those joys, which are the effect of being reconciled to God through the death of his Son. Happy is that man, who has a good report amongst his fellow-men; but blessed is the one, who, like Enoch, walketh with God, and who enjoyeth the smiles of his reconciled countenance, and that peace which passeth understanding.

2d. When we see criminals arraigned before human tribunals, we should exercise compassion and pity, rather than scorn and contempt. They may not be more guilty than some of the spectators. Suppose for instance, a person is condemned for having robbed another of a thousand dollars. Do we look upon him with abhorrence and dread? Perhaps he would not have committed the deed, had he not been in straitened circumstances. Or could he have obtained but a dollar at a time by some other dishonest means, he might not have had recourse to robbery. Probably he would rather have obtained the same sum from several persons than from one. Yes, and the person who habitually cheats but a gill of grain, or a cent at a time, has the same dishonest principle and views. He might be alarmed and deterred from taking a large sum dishonestly, or all that any man possessed. But let his base heart insinuate that a man is wealthy, and that the loss of a thousand dollars would be a mere trifle; if he should have opportunity to cheat or overreach without any means of detection, quickly would his

avarice grasp the dishonest gain. And let the same person be brought to want, he might be more odious and more to be dreaded, than the arraigned criminal. The only difference between the most secret and trifling dishonesty, and the most open and daring robbery, is merely circumstantial. The principle is the same; for he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. A change of condition and the depravity of the human heart, would be sufficient to lead such an one into the most enormous crimes. Then when overt acts, disgrace any of our fellow-mortals, let us inquire of our own hearts, if we cherish the secret lurkings of such a principle in our breasts.

3d. This subject may serve to show, *that though the gain of sin be small, the guilt may be great.* One great principle to be inferred from the text, is, that he who has sinned, though to a small amount in respect to the fruit or profit of the transgression, has, by so doing, incurred a full condemnation. He who has just passed over a forbidden limit, which was distinctly known to him, is unfaithful in the least; and is also guilty in much. For a vindication of this, it is evident, That by a small act of fraud, the line which separates the right from the wrong, is just as effectually broken over, as by a great act of injustice. The Saviour, in the words of the text, speaks to the man who is only half an inch within the limit of forbidden ground, in the very same terms by which he addresses the one who has made the fartherest and the largest excursions over the boundary. Grant that he is but a little way upon the wrong side of the line of demarkation! But why is he upon it at all? It was in the act of crossing that line, that he entered upon the contest between right and wrong; and then it was decided. That was the instant of time at which principle struck her surrender. The great difficulty was to pass the partition wall; for, after that was done, the moral principle has no barriers to obstruct his progress over the whole extent of the

forbidden field but what may be easily surmounted. If he is but a little way within the unlawful territory, even upon its margin, the God who finds him there, will reckon and deal with him as a bold transgressor. In the words of the text, the Saviour has taken his stand on the mere dividing line between what is lawful and what is unlawful; and he gives us to understand, that the man who enters by a single footstep on the forbidden ground, immediately contaminates his person with the full hue and character of guiltiness. He does not make the difference between right and wrong to consist in a gradual shading of the one into the other; and thus obliterate the distinctions of morality. He allows no imperceptible intermixture between the nature and margin of virtue and vice; but gives a clear and decided delineation. It is not a gentle transition for a man to step over from honesty to dishonesty, and from truth to falsehood. There is between them a wall, rising up unto heaven: and the authority of God must suffer violence, ere one inch of entrance can be made into the field of iniquity. The Saviour never glosses over the beginning of crimes. His object is effectually to fortify the limit, to cast a rampart of exclusion around the whole territory of guilt, and to rear it before the eye of man in such characters of strength and sacredness, as should make him feel that it is impregnable.

Again: We may see, that he who is unfaithful in the least, has incurred the condemnation of him who is unfaithful in much; because the littleness of the gain, so far from lessening the guilt, is in fact rather a circumstance of aggravation. It is certain that he who has committed injustice for the sake of a less advantage, has done it on the impulse of a less temptation. He has parted with his honesty at an inferiour price, by bartering it for a mere trifle. And does this lessen his guilt? Certainly it proves how small is the price which he sets upon his eternity; and how cheaply he can bargain away the favour of God, and an inherit-

ance in glory. And the more paltry the traffick is in respect of sinful gain, the more profane it may be in respect of principle. It likens him the more to profane Esau, who sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage. The piercing eye of Him who looketh down from heaven, and pondereth the secrets of every breast, perceives that the man who is abhorrent only in the view of flagrant acts of injustice, has no justice whatever in his character. It is at the precise limit between the right and the wrong, that the flaming sword of God's law is placed. This is strikingly evident in the instance of the first sin that entered the world. What is it that swells the eating of the forbidden fruit with a grandeur so momentous? How came an action, in itself so minute, to be the germe of such mighty consequences? How are we to conceive that our first parents, by one act of disobedience, brought death upon themselves and their posterity? By the eating of the forbidden fruit, a clear requirement, or distinct prohibition was broken. A transition was made from loyalty to rebellion; and an entrance was effected into the kingdom of Satan. If the act itself was a trifle, it served to aggravate the guilt; that, for such a trifle the authority of God could be despised and set at defiance. Moreover, the truth of God was pledged for the execution of the threatening. And now, if for a single transaction, all the felicity of paradise had to be broken up, and the wretched offenders to be turned abroad upon a world, now changed by the curse into a wilderness; and all the woes with which earth is filled, be the direful consequence, let us not hesitate to believe, That he who is unfaithful in that which is least, contracts great guilt; and for the sake of a little gain, incurs an aggravated condemnation.

4th. We may also see, *that he who is faithful in that which is least, is entitled to the highest praise.* In respect both of righteous principle and practice, such an one is, and ought to be considered as being faithful in

that which is much. Who is the man, my hearers, to whom you would most readily confide the whole of your property? He who would disdain to put forth an injurious hand on a single farthing. Of whom would you have the least dread of any unrighteous encroachment? He is the one, all the delicacies of whose principle are awakened when he comes within sight of the dividing limit, which separates justice from injustice. Who is the man whom we shall never find among the greater degrees of iniquity? He who shrinks, with sacred abhorrence, from its smallest degree. Nobleness of condition in life, is not essential as a state for nobleness of character: Nor does a man require to be high in office, to gather around his person the worth and lustre of a high-minded integrity. Humble life may be as rich in moral grace and moral grandeur, as the loftier places of society and refinement. True dignity of principle may be cherished in the breast of a man of the lowest drudgery, as well as in the bosom of him who stands entrusted with the fortunes of an empire. Moreover, that man has the brightest christian character who conscientiously observes all the punctilios of godliness. It is in a humble, and almost unnoticed walk, that he can most effectually prove to his God and his own conscience, that he is a Christian. Hence, the secret walk, the private acts of men, if noble, far the noblest of their lives. And to be faithful in those things that are little, gives the most incontestible evidence, that a man is faithful in that which is much; and consequently entitled to the highest esteem and commendation from his fellow men and the peculiar smiles and approbation of his God. *Amen.*

SERMON XXI.

ON JUSTIFICATION.

Romans iii. 24.

Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

THE doctrine of justification is one of the main pillars, which supports the Christian religion. It is of great importance that it be rightly understood; for it is essential to the system of divine truth, revealed in the sacred scriptures. And that we may have clear views of this fundamental article of Christianity, let us attend to the context. St. Paul, after showing that by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God, illustrates the present subject in the following manner. But now the righteousness of God without the law, is manifested; being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all, them that believe, for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

We are now naturally called upon to attend to the explication of the term, *justification.*

This word is adopted from the proceedings of judicial courts; and denotes the acquittal of a person,

tried by such a court, upon an accusation of a crime. The person accused, being upon trial, found innocent of the charge, is declared to be just in the view of the law; and by an easy and natural figure, is said to be justified: That is, he is made, or found to be just. As the allegations, with which he may be charged, cannot be substantiated against him, he is freed from indictment, and pronounced innocent.

Now, in this original, forensick sense of the term, it is obvious from the declarations of the context, that no human being can be justified by the law, before the bar of God. As all mankind have disobeyed this law, it is clear that he whose judgement is invariably according to truth, must declare them guilty.

Perfect beings are justified by their own obedience; since they fulfil all the demands of the divine law. To them, therefore, the religion of nature is amply sufficient to secure their duty, their acceptance with God, and their final happiness. And as such sustain the character of sinless perfection, their justification is according to a dispensation of perfect righteousness, that renders unto them rewards for personal merit.

But sinful beings cannot thus be justified; because they have not rendered that obedience, which is the only possible ground of justification by law. Consequently, some other ground of justification is absolutely necessary for them, if they be ever accepted and rewarded.

Still the scriptures teach us, For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. It is however certain, that justification, when extended to returning sinners, must in some respects, be a thing widely different from justification under the law. A

subject of law is justified only when he is in the full and strict sense, just: that is, when he has completely obeyed its requisitions. In this case, his obedience is the only ground of his justification, and is all that is essential to it; because he has done every thing required of him, and no act of disobedience can be truly laid to his charge.

From this case, that of the penitent under the gospel differs entirely. He has been guilty of innumerable acts of disobedience, which are all truly chargeable to him. Nor can it ever be truly said, that he has not been guilty of them. If, therefore, he be ever justified, it must be in a sense widely different from that which has been already explained. The term is, then, not used in the gospel because its original meaning, is in every sense, strictly intended; but because this term, figuratively used, better expresses the thing intended, than any other. The act of God denoted by this term, as used in the gospel, so much resembles a forensick and legal justification, that the word is naturally, and by an easy translation, adopted to express this act.

Hence, "to justify," as the term is used in the gospel, is to absolve from an accusation, and to free from the condemnation of past sin by pardon. Justification, as the term is used in the divine word, stands opposed to condemnation; so that it must essentially consist in the acquittal and forgiveness of transgressions. Hear one of the Proverbs of Solomon, appropriate to the point under consideration. He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just; even they both are abomination to the Lord. Again: says the prophet Isaiah, Wo unto them which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous, from him. In both of these expressions it is obvious, from the contrast of the epithets and characters, that to justify the wicked, implies to pardon and acquit them, and to treat them as righteous. And this is the sense

in which the phrase is used in the word of God, when he is said to justify penitent, believing sinners. Therefore, the justification of a sinner, comprises the forgiveness of his sins, the deliverance from their deserved punishment, and entitling him to all the blessings contained in eternal life.

I would now remark, that these three particulars are included in the pardon of sin, if the term pardon be used in its most extensive import. This word is generally used to signify only a partial removal of evil; and not a full, or complete pardon. Let an example be taken for illustration. Suppose a citizen of the United States should commit a crime, for which the law condemned him to stand on the gallows, during one hour, with a rope round his neck. On the day appointed for the disgraceful punishment, a pardon is received from the President; but with this proviso, that the criminal shall never stand as candidate for any publick office, neither be allowed to vote for any candidate to office. Such a pardon would be only a partial removal of evil; for the criminal would be deprived of some of the liberties of a free citizen. A complete pardon would not only remove the disgraceful punishment of the rope and gallows, but it would also entitle him to all the immunities of free citizens, by restoring all those privileges which he would otherwise have enjoyed, had he not committed the crime. Thus, a complete pardon of sin not only gives peace of conscience to the penitent sinner, and delivers him from the threatened penalty of the law; but also places him in such a standing, that he will receive a reward for all those acts which imply true obedience, as if he had never sinned. It is in this light, that we discern the consistency of those scriptural declarations, which teach us that the Lord will reward believers for every good work, and that he will reward every one according to his works. Hence, this is the sense in which we are to understand the term, *justification*, as used

in divine revelation; or the sense, in which mankind are under the gospel, said to be justified.

2d. Let us now inquire in what sense believers are said to be justified freely by the grace of God. Being justified freely by his grace.

From the observations already made, it is evident that their justification can in no sense nor degree be merited by themselves. Then it must, of course, be communicated freely.

The word *grace*, is used by the inspired writers, in various senses. In its original import, it denotes a free gift. As it is used in the text, the unmerited love of God, is exhibited as the original source of all the forfeited blessings conferred upon our guilty world. So under the influence of this love, the Lord formed the original and gracious design of saving mankind from sin and death. The law of God is a perfectly just law. But, by this, man was condemned and finally cast off. Justice, therefore, in no sense demanded the deliverance of mankind from condemnation. Consequently this deliverance was planned by the mere gracious good will of the Most High. The Lord could not but foresee, that the glorious blessings proposed to mankind, would be proffered only to rebels and apostates, who merited nothing but wrath and indignation. Then, unbounded, gracious love, only could operate in the Divine Mind in favour of such beings.

It was also, the same kind of divine love that induced the Son of God to become incarnate, and suffer the just for the unjust, that he might redeem lost man. Love, glowing with bowels of compassion stronger than death, induced him to leave his native heaven and all the adoring hosts, to come into this world to do and suffer all that he did, that there might be justification for the guilty, by grace. Redemption, by his death, proclaims grace unmeasurably great.

The mission and agency of the Divine Spirit, are the result of this same gracious, incomparable love.

In the human character there is nothing to merit the interference of this glorious Person on the behalf of mankind. The Holy Spirit comes to renew and sanctify him; because without his agency in sanctification, he is undone. There is nothing amiable in the moral character of man, to merit or invite his descent and renewing influence. The miserable condition of the human race must be the only inducement to the Spirit of grace, to interfere in this important work.

The several particulars, just mentioned, so plainly necessary to the justification of man, are the result of the unmerited love of God. And his justification itself, also flows entirely from the same gracious love. As grace, in all its operations, implies free unmerited favour; so believers may be said to be justified freely by the grace of God. The forgiveness of their sins, their acquittal from final condemnation, and their admission to the enjoyments of heaven, are all granted them freely and graciously, because God regards them with unparalleled compassion; and is therefore pleased to communicate to them these unspeakable favours.

3d. Let us now inquire in what sense believers are justified through Christ's redemption. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

This expression doubtless implies, that the atoning sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ, is the sole ground of their justification. By these the Divine Redeemer made an atonement for the sins of mankind. In other words, he rendered to the law, character, and government of God, such peculiar honour as to make it consistent with their unchangeable nature and glory, that sinners should, on proper conditions, be forgiven. The pardon of the guilty and rebellious, rendered an atonement absolutely necessary; for the sacred oracles declare, That without the shedding of blood, is no remission.

And, that the blood of Christ is the righteousness by which God the Father justifies the believer in Jesus, appears evident, from the shedding of the blood of beasts in sacrifice, under the law of Moses. These were all types of the great sacrifice that was to be offered in due time. They had no efficacy in themselves to atone for sin; but pointed the believing Jews to the blood of their Redeemer, for pardon.

The important errand for which Christ came into this world, was to make an atonement. Hence, he was set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare God's righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Moreover, believers are represented to be healed by his stripes, to be reconciled to God by his death, and to be justified by his blood. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Thus we are taught, that God justifies believers solely on Christ's account. And Christ's once offering up himself a sacrifice for sin, is the only ground of justification. But how is the atonement of Christ, the ground of pardon? It is the reason for which the Lord can consistently justify the penitent: Or it is that to which he has respect, when he delivers from the curse of the law. If perfect obedience were the ground of justification, man would be cut off; on the ground, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The whole world are guilty before him; therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. Neither can the obedience of the gospel be the ground of justification before God: for the gospel requires all who embrace it, to obey all its precepts; but the lives of the most pious are very imperfect. And should any one who embraces the gospel, live a life of perfect obedience through the remainder of his days, his obedience could not be accounted a ransom; for he would have done no more than his duty: and the law

would have demands for sins previously committed. Moreover, should a man live a thousand years and daily do many more righteous deeds than his duty required, these could not be the ground of his justification in the sight of God; for the law threatens death, or everlasting punishment for every transgression. Hence, even such a life of superabounding good works, could not atone for one sin.

A sinner has nothing in himself, nor is it possible he ever should have any thing, that could render it proper and reasonable that he should, out of respect to that, be forgiven and received to favour. Nothing that can be done by him to make atonement for his sins, will do any thing towards removing the curse of the divine law. No consequent obedience can atone for transgression, so as to remove or even mitigate the curse. The proclamation is gone forth from the throne of the great Eternal, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. But Christ is the end of the law for righteousness: That is, he was made a curse, that he might deliver all who believe in him from the curse of the law. And now God can be just, can act consistently with his righteousness; make a glorious display of his law and government, and maintain all the divine rights, whilst he justifies the believer. In this view, the divine word represents all favour, the forgiveness of sin, and eternal life to be bestowed upon men, not out of regard to their righteousness and worthiness, but purely for the sake of Christ; wholly from a regard to the atonement which he made by his own blood. The whole that is comprised in redemption, flows through Christ: that is, on his account and for his sake. A perfect righteousness does indeed recommend to the divine favour. This the justified sinner has not in himself, but in Christ; whose righteousness is unto all, and upon all them that believe.

Being justified freely by his grace through the

redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation.

The term *redemption*, as used in the word of God, sometimes has reference to the atonement of Christ; and, in other instances, it relates to the actual redeeming of sinners from sin and death. Perhaps both senses are included by the word, as it is expressed in the text. The term *propitiation*, however, is peculiarly expressive of Christ's atoning sacrifice, and its proper import is his atonement.

The word *atonement*, in its original sense, denotes some amends, or satisfaction, for the neglect of some duty, or the commission of some fault. An atonement for a crime committed against a government of any kind, supposes the offender, if he receive the benefit of it, to be pardoned. In this case, it must be such as to leave the government in as good a state, as firm, as honourable, as easily and surely efficacious in its future operations after the offender is pardoned, as it would have been if he had been punished with exact justice. In no other manner can it become a satisfaction for the injury. If all the services of the offender in this case, were due to the government after his crime was committed, it would be impossible for the atonement to be made, unless by another person.. Sin is a crime committed against the government of God. All the services of sinners are owed to him, even while they transgress. No future services of any sinner, therefore, can be any satisfaction for his past sins. If an atonement be made in this case, then, it must be made by a substitute; and this substitute must be able to render services of sufficient value to repair the injury done. In the performance of these services, he must leave the divine government as firm, as honourable, as efficacious in its operations, after the atonement is made, as it was before the crime was committed.

The government of God over his moral creatures, is a moral government: that is, a government of

rules and motives; or of laws, rewards, and punishments. Such a government, even in the hands of Omnipotence, may become weak and inefficacious in the view of its subjects. A law, which, after it has been violated, is not vindicated by punishing the violater, loses, of course, a part of its authority. A moral governour will cease to be regarded with veneration, if, when he is insulted by his subjects, he do not inflict on them the proper punishment. And a moral government cannot be preserved, unless the motives to obedience be continued, to the view of its subjects, in full force.

An atonement for sin, therefore, that is, a complete atonement, must be such as to leave these motives wholly unimpaired. It must consist of such services, as whatever else may be their nature, will, after the transgressors are pardoned, leave the government of God in no degree less venerable, less efficacious, or less likely to be punctually obeyed, than before their sins were committed. As these sins have been very numerous and very great, it is further evident, that the services rendered as a satisfaction for them, must be of great value. And Christ, both by his obedience and sufferings, has magnified the law and made it honourable. With the sacrifice that he made, or the redemption that he wrought, the Father was well pleased. When his soul was made an offering for sin, the highest honour redounded to the Supreme Ruler, to his law and government.

Let us now view the sinner as a bankrupt debtor, who owed ten thousand talents, but had nothing to pay. He has transgressed in innumerable instances and is utterly unable to atone for one of his transgressions. The law of God he has every way violated; and there is no possibility of his making amends. He has destroyed himself; and with all his resources, help is not to be found from a finite arm. In vain may he look to the law for justification, which can only denounce eternal condemnation.

Now, if such an one be ever pardoned, it must be solely on the account of the atonement of Christ. His redemption must be the only ground of his forgiveness and acceptance in the sight of God. And, in this sense of the term, justification, repentance, faith, and a holy life, have not the least possible claim. Nor does even divine grace form any part of it, as a procuring cause in this view; for the sole foundation is Christ's atoning death. To justify, is a phrase of almost the same import, as to pardon; when we consider the ground, or that on the account of which God justifies the ill-deserving.

4th. Let us now attend to the inquiry, in what sense believers are justified by faith. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood.

The expression, *through faith in his blood*, is most expressive; that faith is the bond of union by which believers become united to Christ, so as to be represented as one with him, and to be accounted his members. As the branches are united to the vine, so believers, by a beautiful figure, are said to be united to Christ by faith. It is by this vital union, that his atoning blood is applied to them, through which they receive the full pardon of their sins. In this view we can see the propriety of the declaration, that believers are justified by faith, as they could not be justified without it; for faith is exhibited as the great term or condition of salvation. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Hence it is obvious, that faith is the medium, the instrument, or hand, as it were, with which believers accept the offered good, and lay hold on eternal life.

To become interested in the atonement of Christ, so as to be justified on its account, and for his sake, mankind must be united to him by such a union as will constitute them members of the body, of which he is the head. This union and the consequent re-

lation which are formed between Christ and the justified, are represented in the sacred oracles by various similitudes: By the union of the branches with the vine, by which they are one, having the same sap and life, running through the whole: By the head and members, which make one body: By the union of husband and wife, by which they become one flesh, and the wife shares in the riches, worthiness, and honours of the husband; even though antecedent to this union, she had been poor and unworthy of him. This union of the justified with Christ, is often expressed by their being in him, and abiding in him.

Notwithstanding the atonement of Christ is complete, as a ground of pardon for the sins of all men; or in other words, is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world; still, this does not put any impenitent sinner in such a state as to entitle him to the forgiveness of his sins, and to eternal life. Every sinner will as certainly perish in his iniquities, as if there had been no such Redeemer; unless a moral and vital union take place between him and the Saviour, by his cordial approbation of his character, of his design, and of what he has done and suffered for the sake of the salvation of lost men. Hence, he must be cordially united to him in the character he sustains as the Redeemer of sinners. It is morally improper and incongruous, therefore morally impossible that he should have any interest in the atonement of Christ, so as to be pardoned out of respect to that; while with his whole heart he opposes and rejects him, and is not disposed to come to him that he might have life. While in such a state, there is moral discord between him and the Redeemer: an opposition and refusal to the gracious saving union and relation to him by faith, as he alone is proposed in the gospel.

Let an example be noticed for the sake of illustration. Suppose a rich and most worthy prince should offer himself to a woman, poor and greatly

in debt, to become her husband; consequently to render her rich, respectable, and honourable. Now this proposal could not put her in the possession of these benefits, nor give her the least claim or title to them, unless she should consent to take him as her husband, and cordially receive him as he offers himself. Yea, by refusing his glorious proffer, she would announce to all the subjects of his kingdom, her consummate folly and unworthiness. Thus we see, it is by accepting the offer and by the marriage covenant, that the union and relation of husband and wife takes place, and unites the two as one. They are accounted the united head of their family, and have one common interest. So no sinner can obtain an interest in the unspeakable blessings of Christ's atonement, unless there be a real consent of the heart, and living union by faith; by which moral union they are in such a sense and degree, one: that the sinner, now justified, becomes entitled to the marvellous and inconceivable benefits of redemption.

These remarks render it obvious, that faith is an essential qualification on the part of man, as a prerequisite to his being pardoned. Hence, it is the term of *justification* and *salvation*. Mankind, in an unrenewed state, are ruined and helpless. To them in such a state, Christ is offered as a Saviour on the condition that they will become his; that they will come to him, or give themselves up to him. The act by which this voluntary surrender is accomplished, is the faith of the gospel, and is justly denominated justifying faith. When the soul thus renders itself into the hands of Christ, it complies with his own terms. It casts off all former dependence on its own righteousness for acceptance with God; for forgiveness and justification. Conscious of its entire unworthiness and desert of the Divine anger, the reality and greatness of its guilt, the justice of its condemnation, and the impossibility of expiating its own sins, it casts itself at the footstool of Divine

mercy, as a suppliant for mere pardon; and welcomes Christ as the glorious, efficacious, and all-sufficient atonement for sin and intercessor for sinners. With these views and affections, it yields itself up to him with an entire confidence in all that he hath taught, done, and suffered in the glorious character of Mediator between God and man. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom, also, we have access by faith into this grace wherein ye now stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Thus we may clearly see, that faith is the means by which man, in the economy of redemption, becomes entitled to its inestimable blessings. It is not only the instrument of justification, but may be considered as the hinge on which the whole evangelical system turns. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not, shall not see life. These declarations, show that all the future interests of man are suspended on his faith. Generally, all those passages which speak of mankind as justified and saved by the blood and by the death of Christ, indicate, in an unequivocal manner, that our faith especially respects this as its object; because his death is, in a peculiar sense, the cause of our salvation: since by this, he became a propitiation for the sins of the world. The faith of the gospel always respects Christ as its object. Hence, says St. John, To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. To him that justifieth the ungodly, that is, who pardons and accepts the guilty, the rebellious, when they exercise evangelical faith. Now it must appear indispensible to all, that their faith must respect Christ as its especial object; that whenever this is the fact, they are assured of everlasting life; and wherever it is not, they shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on them.

Now why are mankind justified by faith, rather than by any other christian grace? Says the apostle, Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law. Doubtless faith is made the sole term of justification; because it is the only act which embraces Christ and confides in his atonement for the full pardon of sin. Supreme love to God, repentance for sin, and all other Christian graces, are exercised in the view of different objects; and in this view, are essentially different in their natures. Then justification is annexed to faith, because it is that attribute, or act of the soul, which receives Christ as an atoning and all-sufficient Saviour, as he is freely offered in the gospel.

5th. Let us now inquire, in what sense believers are justified by works? Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

This expression, with the subject inseparable in its connexion, most emphatically establishes the doctrine, that a man is justified by an evangelical and not by a speculative faith; by a living, and not by a dead faith. That is, by a faith which is productive of works, or of a godly life. Hence, obedience to the requisitions of the gospel, would be the best evidence of the genuineness of a man's faith. In this manner, a justifying faith would appear to be real, well grounded, rooted in love, and not spurious. Thus the method is pointed out, by which we are to manifest, or prove our justification by faith, to our fellow-men, to ourselves, and to our God. To elucidate these remarks, let me notice that there are two kinds of faith mentioned in the scriptures, essentially and totally distinct in their natures. The one consists in a speculative belief, or mere assent of the understanding to probable evidence. The other, is that gracious confidence in Christ, orthe faith of the gospel. From the former of these, obedience to God never sprang, and cannot spring. The latter is in its own nature, productive of obedience.

St. James introduces his discussion of this subject, with these questions: What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? Undoubtedly it can, if it can justify him. But such a faith implies not the least shadow of evidence of its being of a saving nature. The justifying faith of the gospel, is the faith which worketh by love and purifieth the heart; the faith by which alone man believeth unto righteousness.

The uselessness of a faith unproductive of works, St. James then elucidates, by an allusion to an inactive and worthless benevolence. If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace; be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye gave them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? As such philanthropy is not only of no use, and therefore, of no value, but a reproach to him who professes it, because his conduct gives the lie to his professions, so the faith of him who believes the gospel and whose life is not governed by its all important doctrines and precepts, is equally destitute of worth, and reproachful to his character. In the words of the apostle, Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

Next it is proved in the strongest manner, that such a faith is not the faith of a Christian. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith and I have works: Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Christ taught the great doctrine, that his disciples were to be known by their fruits only; and that these were the true, regular, and invariable proofs of that faith by which they were constituted Christians. But the faith, that is without works, is wholly destitute of the grand characteristicks of that faith which is a well spring of water, flowing out unto everlasting life. Consequently, it cannot be of the nature of justifying faith.

Now let us attend to declarations which exhibit

the present subject in a light so clear, as to present the truth beyond controversy. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble. The devils are the subjects of speculative belief; but it will not be pretended, that they can be the subjects of justifying faith. It is impossible for fallen angels to exercise this kind of faith, as a Saviour was never provided for them nor the means of redemption in their behalf made known. Neither can holy angels exercise the saving faith of the gospel, as they need no Saviour and no pardon. And if guilty man should believe in the existence of a God, and tremble in view of his natural and moral perfections, the nature of his faith would be the same as that of the devils. No good works would be the result.

With precision let the subject be exhibited under a different form. But wilt thou know, O vain man! that faith without works is dead? Vain man, or hypocrite. But surely the faith of the hypocrite, is not the faith of the gospel. It is the contrast most certainly. It is not a living, but a dead faith.

If we compare such a faith with that of Abraham, the subject will be farther illustrated. Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works, when he had offered up Isaac, his son, upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God: and it was imputed to him for righteousness. And he was called the friend of God. Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. These expressions plainly evince, that the faith of Abraham was the genuine faith of the gospel; a real, operative confidence in the promises of God. This it showed in a very forcible manner; because he manifested singularly great and self-denying obedience.

St. James repeats the passages in three different instances; and clearly proves the same doctrine to

be the main thing on which he meant to insist, in these concise and emphatical words. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. The true import of these words, is not that evangelical faith is ever a dead faith; for it cannot exist without being operative of good works. But such a faith as is unproductive of Christian obedience is a mere speculative, lifeless faith. Hence, a man is justified by works; as they are the consequence, fruit, and evidence of a saving justifying faith.

We are now naturally led to the true sense of the following declaration: Now to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. By the expression, *to him that worketh not*, is evidently to be understood, one who does not attempt to work, to recommend himself to the favour of God by his moral goodness, so as to be justified by the deeds of the law. He renounces all pretence and expectation of acceptance in this manner, by his works. In opposition to working, so as to render himself worthy of a reward in a legal sense, and to bring God in debt to him, his hope is founded in the faith of the gospel, to which the promise of pardon is annexed. The following reason is subjoined. Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

Hence, even good works, those which are truly evangelical, are not designed to recommend a man to the divine favour; but to be an evidence of pardon, acceptance, and justification by faith. They are to be a manifestation, that our faith is genuine, the faith of the gospel, which, through the grace of God, is saving, or is connected with the promise of salvation.

IMPROVEMENT.

1st. This subject exhibits evidence, that the gospel furnishes a consistent scheme of salvation to man-

kind. The gospel takes man, where it finds him, in a state of sin and ruin; condemned by the law of God to final perdition, and incapable of justification by his own righteousness. In this situation, it announces to him a Saviour, divinely great and glorious; divinely excellent and lovely, assuming his nature, to become an expiation for his sins; revealing to him the way of reconciliation to God, and of eternal salvation. The terms on which he may be reconciled, it discloses with exact precision and perfect clearness. Repentance towards God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a godly life, include them all. They are terms the most reasonable in themselves, and productive of incomprehensible good to all who embrace them. The way of salvation is here become a highway; and way-faring men, though fools, need not err therein. Natural religion does not hold forth the method of return and reconciliation to God. It is the religion of the law, which proclaims, Do these things, and thou shalt live: but the soul that sinneth, shall die. We have sinned, and the sentence pronounced on those who disobey, is a sentence of final condemnation. In such a situation, what man, not lost to sense and thought, would not hail the dawn of the gospel with transport; and joyfully welcome the clear rising of the Sun of righteousness, to illume his path through this melancholy world, to dispel the darkness of the grave, and brighten his passage to the heavens!

2d. In the light of this subject, we may see that we are under unspeakable obligations of gratitude to each of the Divine persons in the Godhead.

In view of the unbounded grace of God as the originating, moving cause of justification, praise unspeakable is due to the Father, who devised the great plan of man's redemption; by which sinners, entirely ruined, are in a savable state. Neither men nor angels could have been adequate for devising the wondrous scheme. Matchless the wisdom, and

matchless the grace! Had the Father refused to offer his Son, that he might become a sacrifice for sin, the case of man must have been as hopeless as that of the sinning angels. Every one of the human family must inevitably have had their portion in endless perdition.

And when the Father had devised the plan, and proposed the terms to the Son, that redemption should be purchased by his blood, had the Son been unwilling and rejected the proposal, none of the guilty sons and daughters of Adam could have escaped hell and obtained heaven. All must have sunk down to the regions of sorrow and everlasting despair. But the Son, for the honour and glory of his Father, and in the most tender compassion for a world of sinners in a desperate condition, says, Lo! I come: I delight to do thy will, O my God. Hence, in the fulness of time, He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And are the atoning sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ the sole ground of pardon, or that on the account of which God the Father justifies any of this rebellious world? Then how unspeakable are the obligations of gratitude to the Son!

And as believers are justified by a living faith which is productive of works, equal praise is due to the Holy Spirit. All mankind are so dead in trespasses and sins, as to stand in perishing need of his divine renewing influence to work in their hearts evangelical faith, which alone embraces a Saviour, and is connected with a godly life. Unless the Divine Spirit enable them to work out their salvation, they would draw back unto perdition. Through his agency the blood of Christ is applied, the work of grace perfected, and the soul prepared

for immortal glory. In the economy of redemption, and in the view of the different senses of justification, each of the divine persons has claims for the most lively gratitude for interminable ages.

Then let us give to the Father praise,
Give glory to the Son;
And to the Spirit of his grace,
Be equal honours done.

Let all the redeemed shout aloud for joy; and whilst for ever exulting in the Author of their salvation, give glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

3rd. This subject renders it evident, that they who reject the atonement of Christ, can have no well-grounded hope of obtaining the divine favour.

Without a vital, operative faith, no saving benefit can result to mankind from the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. A mere ground for pardon, though ever so complete, cannot profit those who refuse compliance with the proposed condition. And, indeed, a mere speculative, dead faith, and a rejected Saviour, will serve to sink the soul down to the lowest abodes of perdition. How peculiar the guilt of setting at nought the singular, the eminently divine goodness of God, manifested in the wonderful provision for the recovery of lost man! It is beyond the power of man to conceive in what manner they could more contemptuously despise the divine character, or in what manner they could more insolently affront the divine grace and mercy. Shall rebel man sit in impenitence from the cradle to the grave, under the noon-day light of the gospel? Shall he in unbelief, bask through life, in the beams of the Sun of righteousness? Such ingratitude is wonderful; such insolence, amazing; such guilt, incomprehensible. Still by what multitudes is the Redeemer of sinners, regarded with cold-hearted unbelief and stupid indifference! How often is his glorious name profaned and blasphemed by those to whom he is offered as a

Saviour from sin and death. By how many is he treated with open opposition and avowed contempt, till they launch hopeless into eternity!

4th. We may see that the promised rewards of the gospel to believers for all their good works, are rewards of grace.

All will grant that the rewards of the gospel must be of grace, and not of debt; since the salvation of believers has its origin and completion wholly founded in the grace of God, and through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The apostle Paul, speaking of future retribution in his epistle to the Romans, teaches that God will render to every man according to his deeds. To them who by patient continuing in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life. Hence, they who shall have done but little for the honour and glory of God, will not receive so great a reward as those that shall have been more faithful, having suffered all manner of persecution for Christ's sake. The same apostle encourages the Hebrews to good works, in the following strain: God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. Again: He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. Love ye your enemies, and do good; and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great.

Various remarks might be made which would show that the rewards of the gospel, promised according to works and for works, are rewards of grace. This is evidently true; for sinners who cannot be justified by the deeds of the law, could not be the subjects of reward in any other way. If their obedience, faithfulness, or sufferings, should ever be rewarded, it must, for various reasons, be wholly of grace.

It was the grace of God that proposed a new and living way of salvation by a Redeemer. And without

an atonement, mankind could not have been placed on probationary ground; consequently they could never have been in a state whereby it would be consistent for rewards to be bestowed or promised. That they are in a state of probation, called upon to repent and work righteousness; and encouraged to faithfulness from promises of everlasting rewards, is to be ascribed to the free grace of God, through the redemption of his Son. Hence, all the rewards promised for works, must be rewards of grace.

Moreover, it is the grace of God that calls upon mankind, awakens, renews, sanctifies, and enables them to bring forth the fruits of righteousness. Even while they work out their salvation with fear and trembling, it is God, by his holy and gracious Spirit, that worketh in them to will and to do of his good pleasure. And since their obedience is not that of sinless perfection by the deeds of the law, but of faith in the Redeemer, and that by grace, their salvation and consequent glorious eternal rewards, are the effect of grace from the foundation to the top stone.

5th. This subject should serve to prevent injurious disputes among professed Christians, concerning their justification. Unprofitable contentions do sometimes arise, concerning this subject; because the term *justification*, is not understood in the same sense. The question of dispute, is generally this: Whether believers be justified wholly and absolutely on the account of the atonement of Christ? In the light of this subject we see that they are, in one of the senses in which the term justification is used. The sacred scriptures no where teach us that they are justified partly on account of their own righteousness, and partly on the account of the righteousness of Christ.

When a man is said to be justified by grace, in this view his justification must be attributed wholly to the grace of God as the originating first cause. His works can claim no merit, nor form any part.

When justification is mentioned through the re-

demption of Christ Jesus, his atoning sufferings are the sole and absolute ground; as believers obtain the pardon of their sins, wholly on Christ's account.

If a man be said to be justified by faith, that vital union by which he becomes united to Christ, is to be understood as the sole means of his justification. A living, operative faith is the great stipulated term by which he receives the glorious benefits of redemption. Faith, which worketh by love, is an essential qualification on the part of man, before he can be justified.

As it respects the *way* of salvation and the ground of pardon for sin, Christ is indeed all in all for justification in the sight of God. There can be no part, no claim, no merit whatever from any other quarter, in this view of the present subject.

Still, without evangelical faith, a man cannot become interested in the redemption of Christ Jesus. He must have the qualifications prescribed in the gospel, as a pre-requisite on his part, or he can never be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. Unless a man, in a moral sense become a new creature, all that Christ has done and suffered, cannot avail, cannot profit him. He must have the terms, specified in the gospel, in his own person; must have Christ formed in the soul, the hope of glory, by the renewing of the Holy Spirit, or he cannot be justified by Christ, by faith, nor by works. Except the soul be renewed and sanctified by the Divine Spirit, while in the body, and rendered perfectly holy before it be ushered into the immediate presence of its Judge, there will be no atonement and no intercessions of the Son of God, to deliver or prevent it from departing into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Thus we may see, that the atonement of Christ, and the obedience of believers, have no intermixture in justification. The one forms no part of the other. Both the nature and end of each are en-

tirely separate and distinct. The one is the foundation, the sole ground of pardon, and claims the glory of eternal salvation. The other consists in the mere qualification, or preparedness of the soul for the favour of God, and the employments of heaven; and ascribes to him all the praise for the unspeakably gracious and glorious blessings of the gospel. The one is an invaluable ransom offered, and most glorious consequent blessings included; the other flows from their acceptance.

If professed Christians would form distinct views of the term *justification*, as it is used in its several senses, in the word of God, conversation on this subject, for edification, would take the place of painful disputes, calculated to darken the understanding and increase prejudice. If the subject be clearly understood in its various relations and uses, why cannot the Methodists and Presbyterians be at peace in regard to this point? Must it not be their misconceptions, or misunderstanding of each other, that can at any time, set them at variance? Whenever they discourse or argue about the glorious doctrine of gospel justification, let it be in the spirit of meekness, and for mutual benefit; but not a striving for the mastery. Let them regard their glorious and divine Redeemer and the salvation of the redeemed, as subjects too valuable to be the theme of bitter and hostile reproaches.

6th. This subject, with light and force, presents itself to the understanding and conscience of every ungodly impenitent sinner, that he repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Every soul of man is so polluted with sin, as to be an infinite debtor to the grace of God, if ever saved with an everlasting salvation. And who has not already committed sins of a nature so odious, and to that extent, as to need the atoning blood of the Son of God for pardon? But in addition to the divine law being every way violated, will a Saviour set at nought, despised, and rejected,

deliver from perdition impenitent, unbelieving, Christless sinners? No; Such a dishonour, a reproach so unparalleled, no intelligent in heaven could endure! Reader, the inconceivable and eternal glories of the gospel must be yours, must be cordially embraced in your heart by faith, or all its curses will be poured out upon you as your inevitable doom. God is not mocking you in the declarations of his holy word; in the terms of acceptance and justification, neither in his promises, nor his threatenings. Christ must be your Saviour from sin and eternal death, or he will be your Judge to sentence you to everlasting punishment. Then may you and I duly reflect how happy, what blessed beings, we shall be for eternity! if we believe in him to the saving of our souls. By faith, then, may we embrace him as our God and Saviour, our divine and glorious Redeemer. *Amen.*

SERMON XXII.

DEATH AND THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

Ecclesiastes xii. 7.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.

IN the beginning of this chapter, Solomon enforces upon the young the importance of an early remembrance of their Creator, by a consideration of the evils incident to old age. The gloom, feebleness, and despondency of this period of life, are arrayed before the mind in a series of images, of remarkable elegance and expressiveness. In old age, the relish for the pleasures of life, is lost; and men grow indifferent even to those objects, which once occasioned the most agreeable sensations. Hence, the sun with its pleasant light, the fair moon and radiant stars, are as it were, obscured to them: or the imagination, memory, and judgement, the lights of the mind, are so impaired, that they seem darkened. One affliction or pain, succeeds another, as clouds return after showers in a rainy season. The hands and arms, with which a man defends himself from assaults and accidents, as watchmen keep the house, grow feeble, tremble, and falter when their help is requisite. The legs and thighs which as strong men support the body, seem in old age, to bend under its weight. The teeth which used to grind the food, are most of them gone; and the few that remain, become useless. The eyes, by which the soul looked as it were, out at the windows, grow dim. In such a melancholy state, men have no inclination to eat; as they cannot grind or chew their food without pain and difficulty. And

they keep at home, retired, having their doors shut towards the street. Their rest is so easily disturbed, that they awake and rise up uneasy and alarmed at the least noise, even at the singing of a bird. The voice and the ear, those daughters of musick, are no longer capable of performing their functions; or the spirits are too languid to attend with satisfaction. Every ascent in the way terrifies them, on account of the labour of climbing; and they shun every high place, through fear of falling. Their heads covered with silver locks, seem to blossom like the almond tree: And every little inconvenience, though but the weight or chirping of a grass-hopper, is a burden to them. They are bowed down, and draw nigh to the end of their journey, and to the house appointed for all the living.

When these things take place, then the silver cord will be loosed, which may mean the inexplicable bond of union between the soul and body; or the spinal marrow, which continues sensation by the nerves, from the brain to every part of the body. Or the whole verse may be a description of the functions of life, taken from a well, where is a cord to the bowl or bucket, with which the water is drawn; a wheel, by which it is the more easily raised; a cistern, into which it may be poured; and a pitcher, or vessel, with which it is carried away: but now all are broken, or loosened and become useless. Thus at death, the lungs no more play; the heart ceases to beat, and the blood to circulate. Every vessel becomes useless: The whole surprising machinery for forming and communicating the blood, which is the life, from the fountain of the heart to every extremity of the body, is now entirely deranged. The silver cord is loosed; the golden bowl broken; the pitcher and the wheel are marred at once.

Thus, when animal life shall cease, and the mysterious union of soul and body shall be dissolved, then shall the dust, or the material frame, return unto the

earth as it was, and mingle with its original dust. How great and affecting the change! What was once animate, now becomes inanimate: What was once life and activity, becomes lifeless and inactive: What was once a regular organized body, becomes irregular, disarranged particles of dust: And what was once the beauty and delight of the eye, becomes deformity and a loathsome mass of corruption. The decree went forth against our first parents, Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. They were the subjects of its execution, and innumerable of their descendants have followed them. Abraham viewed himself as constantly liable to be turned to clay, for he says, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes. Job, who was once dear and lovely to his friends, became loathsome and offensive to them, even while life remained. His proclamation is, My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome. What a melancholy description! Our souls sicken at the disgusting recollection. Hear his interrogation concerning the human race: Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly: How much less in them, that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth.

The declaration of Jehovah, is, All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again to the dust. The united voice of the inspired writers, every age and nation attest, It is appointed unto man once to die.

Two things are worthy of notice in relation to the human body. The first is its vast superiority over all the animal creation, in regard to the erectness of its form, the nobleness of its frame, the admirable texture, and wonderful arrangement of its animated particles. None of the creatures upon earth will

bear a comparison to its agreeable symmetry, its interesting aspect, and dignified structure. The second is its most loathsome situation, when turned to corruption. No animal, when in its highest state of putrefaction, is so loathsome and disgusting as the human body. Perhaps it becomes as much more putrid and nauseous, as it was once the more beautiful and lovely.

Doctor Dwight has the two following particulars, in regard to the things which immediately after death, respect the body.

1st. *That the body is changed into a corpse.*

Death is the termination of all the animal functions of our nature. So long as these continue, life the result of them, diffuses warmth, activity, and beauty throughout our frame. In this state, the body is a useful as well as pleasing habitation for the soul; and a necessary, as well as convenient instrument for accomplishing the purposes to which it is destined in the present world. But, when these functions cease, life also ceases. The body then becomes cold, motionless, deformed, and useless. The form which once gave pleasure to all around it, now creates only pain and sorrow. The limbs are stiffened; the face clouded with paleness; the eyes closed in darkness; the ears deaf; the voice dumb; and the whole appearance ghastly and dreadful. In the mean time, the spirit deserts it ruined habitation and wings its way into the unknown vast of being.

2d. *The body is conveyed to the grave.*

Necessity compels the living to remove this decayed frame from their sight. Different nations have pursued different modes of accomplishing this purpose. By some nations, the body has been consumed with fire. By others, it has been embalmed. By some it has been lodged in tombs, properly so called. By others it has been consigned to vaults and caverns; and by most has been buried in the grave. All nations, in whatever manner they have disposed of

the remains of their departed friends, have, with one consent, wished like Abraham, to remove their dead out of their sight.

In this situation, the body becomes the prey of corruption and the feast of worms. How humiliating an allotment is this to the pride of man! When the conquerour, returned from the slaughter of millions, enters his capitol in triumph; when the trumpet of fame proclaims his approach, and the shouts of millions announce his victories; surrounded by the spoils of subjugated nations, and followed by trains of vanquished kings and heroes; how must his haughty spirit be lowered to the dust by the remembrance that within a few days, himself would become the food of a worm, reigning over him with a more absolute controul than he ever exercised over his slave. Yet this will be the real end of all his achievements. To this humble level must descend the tenant of the throne, as well as of the cottage. Here wisdom and folly, learning and ignorance, refinement and vulgarity will lie down together. Hither moves with an unconscious, but regular step, the beauty that illumines the gay assembly's gayest room; that subdues the heart even of the conquerour himself; and says, I sit as queen and shall see no sorrow. All these may say, and ultimately must say to corruption, Thou art our father; and to the worm, Thou art our mother and our sister. But we are not yet at the end of the progress. The next stage in our humiliation, is to be changed into dust. This was our origin: this is our end. The very clods on which we tread, were once, not improbably, parts to a greater or less extent, of living beings like ourselves. Not a small part of the surface of this world has, in all probability, been animated and inhabited by human minds: And the remains of man, are daily, perhaps as well as insensibly, turned up by the plough and the spade.

2d. Let us attend to some reflections concerning the spirit or soul of man after death.

First. *At death the soul quits the body to return to it no more, as an animal frame, for its companion.*

At death, the animal functions cease; or rather the cessation of them, is death itself. Then the flexibility, the power of action, and the consequent usefulness to which they gave birth, are terminated also. The soul, of course, finds the body no longer fitted to be an instrument of its wishes or its duties. The limbs can no longer convey it from place to place; the tongue cannot communicate its thoughts, nor the hands execute its pleasure. Deprived of all its powers, the body becomes a useless and uncomfortable residence, for a being to whose nature activity is essential; and the purposes of whose creation, would be frustrated by a longer confinement to so unsuitable a mansion. We cannot wonder, therefore, that the Author of our being, should in his providence, remove the soul from a situation so contradictory in all respects to the design of its existence. Though the body was once its beloved partner, yet utility now demands an entire separation. And they are not only disunited, but their abodes are in different worlds. Whilst the one is consigned to the mansions of the dead, the other becomes an inhabitant of the world of spirits. And whilst the one is deprived of all sensation and enjoyment, the other is rendered more sensible and active, and its happiness or misery augmented.

Second. *It certainly is possible for the soul thus to survive the body.*

There is nothing absurd in the belief, that the soul exists in a state of perfect consciousness when the body is deprived of animal life and of all sense, and turned to dust; for they are essentially different in their natures. The one is a material substance, the other immaterial: The one is naturally sluggish, inactive, and unconscious; but the other is by nature, alert, active, and conscious. Moreover, the soul is the agent which actuates and governs the body in all

the various movements of life, in such a manner that the body is as it were a mere machine, performing all those things which the soul directs. It labours or rests; moves hastily or slowly; views distant or present objects at the discretion of this intelligent agent. Hence, it is the soul which denominates the person. Were we possessed of our present organized bodies, and endued with animal life without the soul, we should not be constituted human beings; but would be sunk to the grade of the animal creation. St. James remarks, The body without the spirit, is dead: This expression favours the sentiment that the soul is distinct and can exist separate from the body. St. Peter calls the soul himself, and the body the tabernacle for the soul. His words are, Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me.

There is no more difficulty in supposing the soul of man to be capable of existing in a conscious and active state, when separated from the body, than in supposing any other spirit to be capable of existing and acting without a body. Are angels unembodied? Why may not the spirits of deceased persons exist in a similar state? Surely such a thing is more than possible; and the belief of such existence is not inconsistent nor improbable.

Third. *Evidence may be derived from the great desire and universal expectation of mankind, that the soul will exist, a conscious and active being, after it has forsaken the body.*

In the human breast there is a secret and strong desire of immortality. The soul, so averse to annihilation, shrinks at the very thought. As it is capable of making constant improvements in useful knowledge, so with all the opportunities of life and of age, it only makes a beginning towards its perfection. Hence, there is an ardent desire for im-

mortality, and a strong aversion to the thought of annihilation.

Moreover, mankind are looking forward beyond the grave; some with awful, and others with joyful expectation. Human beings have apprehensions of future rewards and punishments so universally, that this appears to be the consent of all nations in every age of the world. The criminal condemned to death, fears the dreadful hour of his execution, not as the end of his being, but as the entrance into a world of strict retribution. The good man, with joyful anticipation, looks forward to the event of his dissolution, not merely as an end of his trials, but as the commencement of a glorious reward. Let us go to the solemn chambers of death, and inquire of those who are about to depart. The impenitent and unreconciled in heart to God, with deep distress, are constrained to express their awful apprehensions of an existence beyond the grave. On the other hand, the man of penitence and submission, with cheering expectation and ecstasy of expression, evinces his views of death as the gate to immortal glory. And the desire of immortality, and the universal expectation of a future conscious existence, are not merely the effect of a religious education; but they are sentiments implanted in the active principles of our nature, by the Author of our being; and as it respects their propensity, are innate. They doubtless are improved by moral culture; but their original is God.

Fourth. *The consideration of the present state of things, will furnish an argument of much weight, to prove the future existence of the human soul.*

Divine Providence is so administered in the present world, as to furnish strong presumptive evidence, that there will be another state of human existence, as a world of righteous retribution. Do we believe that the supreme, moral governour and Disposer of all existences and events, is a being of the most per-

fect righteousness and goodness? Then we must conclude that the present life is only a state of probation; for we cannot with clearness discern these important truths merely from the present dispensation. No man knoweth either love or hatred, by all that is before him. Hence, then, there is nothing in the bestowment of favours, or the sending of judgements, which can enable us with assurance to determine that God is perfectly righteous and good, should we confine our views solely to the present state of things. Were this the only state of existence for human beings, and should we judge from the allotments of Providence, we could not discern who were righteous, or who wicked; who the friends of God, or who his enemies. We should be liable to pronounce the rich man the favourite of heaven, and Lazarus a son of perdition. And consequently, we could not determine with any degree of certainty, that the Lord loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity; for many of the righteous suffer very great and grievous calamities, drinking deeply of the cup of affliction, of poverty, and persecution; while some of the wicked, even the openly profane and licentious, are crowned with wealth and worldly prosperity, raised to great worldly honours, and followed with affluence to their graves. These remarks give conclusive evidence, that this world is not designed as a state of righteous retribution; but as a state of probation, in which characters are formed, and souls prepared for future rewards and punishments. Therefore we may conclude from the present state of things, and from the most perfect righteousness and goodness of God, that the souls both of the righteous and of the wicked, will exist beyond the grave, and be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body.

Fifth. *By various considerations we are taught from divine revelation, that the soul exists in a state of sensibil-*

ity and activity, and of happiness or misery, from death till the resurrection and general judgement.

In the words of the text, we are informed, That then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it. Thus we may see, the soul and body are natures so essentially different, that in a certain sense, they are two distinct beings: That the one returns to the earth, as from that it was formed; and the other returns to God, as he is the Father of all spirits. The most obvious sense of the latter part of the text is, that at death, the soul is adjudged and awarded with strict retribution, according to the moral character formed while in the body: That the souls of the righteous return to God, to be received into his peculiar favour; and the souls of the wicked, to be banished from his glorious presence. I have already noticed there is nothing absurd in such a belief; for we can as easily conceive of the souls of the righteous and of the wicked, existing without an earthly house of a tabernacle, as we can of the existence of the spirits of angels and of devils; and that the souls of the former may be as capable of enjoyment or suffering, as are the latter.

Although the souls of the righteous may not participate so great a degree of happiness, nor the souls of the wicked endure so great a degree of misery, as they will after the resurrection and general judgement, still this does not militate against the reality of their consciousness, and of their existence in a world of righteous retribution. It is probable that the holy angels will then be more exalted in glory; and the devils are bound under chains of darkness, reserved to the judgement of the great day, when they expect to suffer fiercer torments, as appears from this their interrogation of the Saviour: Art thou come to torment us before the time? Hence, fallen angels have not yet received their final judge-

ment, nor of course, their final reward. A similar remark would apply to the condition of the souls of mankind in an intermediate state. Notwithstanding, virtuous men when they leave this world, go to a state of enjoyment only; and impenitent men, to a state of mere suffering. Lazarus was only comforted after he left this world, and the rich man was only tormented. When the bodies of mankind shall be changed and re-united to their spirits, there can be no doubt that the happiness of the righteous and the misery of the wicked will be rendered more complete. But, antecedently to that event, both the happiness and the misery will be entire and unmingled. The happiness will in no degree be alloyed by suffering; the misery will in no degree be lessened by enjoyment.

The soul after death returns immediately to God, to give an account of its conduct in the present life. This appears to be the plain import of the text, in which the return of the body to the dust, and of the soul to God, are exhibited as co-existing events. That the purpose of its return to God, is that it may give up its account, appears sufficiently plain from the parables of the talents and the pounds. In these, each of the servants is represented as summoned to give, and as actually rendering his account to his lord concerning his use or abuse of the privileges entrusted to him, immediately after the close of his stewardship. And in this account will be unfolded, alike the state of the thoughts and that of the external conduct. The soul will of course be furnished with a power of recollection, sufficiently capacious to comprehend all that it has done, and will be constrained to declare the whole truth without disguise or evasion. Its secret chambers and refuges of lies will be fully laid open to its own view, and appear manifest as in the sight of God. In this manner, the motives by which it has been governed, and the moral character which it has sustained

during its probation, will be so entirely developed, as to evince even to itself, that the investigation is just as well as complete. The decision and retribution of all that it has done during its probation, will be in perfect righteousness. But the sacred volume, from a variety of considerations, establishes the proposition now under consideration. There are several particular persons brought into view in the divine word, who are represented as being already in heaven, or in a state of activity and enjoyment. The Lord styles himself the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. And our Saviour observes, He is not the God of the dead, but of the living: That is, the God of the spirits of these patriarchs, living at the time when this declaration was made to Moses. Hence their souls must be alive, or in a state of active existence, though their bodies were dead and laid in sepulchres.

That saints are in heaven in the intermediate state, in such a sense as implies a world of action and enjoyment, is evident from scriptural facts. Abraham is there; for saints are represented as being carried into his bosom. Moses and Elias, doubtless are there; for they appeared on the mount of transfiguration with Christ, since their death. Enoch and Elijah are already there, for they were translated. And Christ said to the penitent thief on the cross, To-day shalt thou be with me paradise. But how could this be verified, unless the departed spirit exist in a separate state of enjoyment? Whether the term *paradise*, be significant of the final state of the blessed in heaven, or of the invisible intermediate state of the souls of the righteous, between death and the general judgement, it is very evident that the Saviour designed to convey to the penitent, the idea that his soul, when absent from the body, should witness his presence, in a state of consciousness and happiness. The apostle Paul exhorts his fellow Christians not to be slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience

inherit the promises; plainly intimating, that departed saints now possess the inheritance of saints in light, and consequently exhibiting conclusive testimony of the immediate happiness of believers after death. The Apostle evidently designed to lead his readers to meditate on the blessed state of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Job, and all others, who on earth had lived by faith in the promises of God, patiently waiting, labouring, and suffering in obedience to the divine will; and who at the time this exhortation was given, were inheriting the glorious reward of the blessings promised.

Concerning the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it is said, They gave up the ghost, or rendered their spirits to God, who gave them, and were gathered unto their people. By this declaration we are not to understand, that their bodies were gathered to the bodies of their kindred. The people of Abraham were all buried either in Padan Aram, or in Ur, of the Chaldees; while he was buried in the cave of Macpelah, in Canaan. Isaac was buried with none of his friends beside his parents; and these could not be styled his people. The people, then, to whom these patriarchs were gathered, were the assembly of the blessed. The gathering must relate to their persons, or souls, and not to their bodies. In conformity to this interpretation, Christ says concerning Lazarus, that he died, and was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom: a complete proof, that he was in existence among the blessed, at the time to which this parable refers.

The apostle Paul, addressing his brethren, the Corinthians, declares, Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; and subjoins, We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. We are here taught, that believers can be absent from the body; and that this absence must take place, to enable them to be present with the

Lord, and that whenever it does, they will be present with him. Hence, then, believers, that is, their souls, exist in a state separate from the body. Would not the Apostle and his brethren appear to be inconsistent in their expression, "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord," if that were a state of sleep and unconsciousness? We can easily see the absurdity of such an opinion; for there can be no enjoyment in a state of inactivity and insensibility. The Apostle had an ardent desire to serve Christ more perfectly; and he was confident, that death would prove to him an entrance into his immediate presence. This faith inspired him and his brethren, with confidence and fortitude; as they were satisfied, that whenever their bodies should be worn out by labours, or suffer martyrdom, their souls being dislodged from the clayey tenement, would immediately be admitted into the presence of their beloved Lord. This surely is very decisive concerning the felicity to be enjoyed by the souls of believers, when absent from the body; and it also shows that they will possess their happiness in the very place where Jesus displays his glorious presence.

The same Apostle expresses his assurance of the same truth very fully, in his address to the Philippians. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. When the Apostle says, "For me to live is Christ;" he implicitly declares that the present life is to him a source of high enjoyment. But if he should not have sense of existence in a separate state, his death would put an end to all his enjoyment; being an entire termination of his consciousness. If, then, his life was desirable, his death would to him be a loss. And how great must this loss be, as he informs us, It was Christ for him to live. But he informs us, that the gain of his departure, consisted in being with Christ;

in a state of happiness, totally superiour to any thing found in the present world. Here, indeed, he enjoyed the presence of his Saviour, in an eminent degree; yet, in a manner, far inferiour to what he was assured he should experience immediately after death. The Apostle was fully persuaded that the soul was immaterial, and that the dissolution of the body would not render it insensible; but that it would then be more active in the service of God. And as it would not be impeded in its operations by its mortal frame, it would exercise itself the more freely; thus his joy would be greatly increased. With peculiar animation the Apostle has here declared the happy frame of his mind; viewing Christ as the author and supporter of his Christian graces and joys, and as the end and object of his life upon earth. He had no other business, interest, or pleasure, for which to live, than the service, glory, and favour of Christ; therefore, he knew that to die would be his greatest gain: as he should then be enabled more perfectly to know, love, and serve his Lord, and enjoy his blessed presence. Yet, if he should continue to live in the flesh and endure hardship a little longer, it would be well; as his labour would be fruitful of good to himself, as well as to others. Thus he knew not which he should choose, if it were left to him; being in a strait between two, and drawn both ways by the reasons which he had to desire life on the one hand, and death on the other. Indeed, he had a most vehement longing to depart from this world of sin and sorrow, that he might immediately go and be with Christ; exchanging the life of faith, hope, and imperfect love, for that of sight, fruition, and perfect holiness; as this was incomparably more desirable, than any thing which could be possessed or enjoyed upon earth. Nevertheless, his continuance here being the more needful for the benefit of his beloved people, he was willing to postpone the completion of his own happiness for their advantage. And now,

could the Apostle conceive that a state of insensibility would be much better than a life tending so much as his did, to the glory of God, to the propagation of the gospel, and to the furtherance of the joy of believers? The doctrine of the soul's immediate happiness with Christ in glory, is here declared so evidently, that it is beyond almost the possibility of being doubted.

I shall now notice the parable concerning the beggar and the rich man. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. In this parable we have the account of one already in a state of activity and blessedness, and another in a state of activity and misery. Its design was to represent the state of the souls of the righteous and of the wicked immediately after death, till the day of the resurrection of the body and general judgement. This we can readily determine from the connexion. The rich man cried, and said, father Abraham have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But when he was denied the least mercy for himself, he desired that Lazarus might be sent to his father's house, that he might testify to his five brethren, lest they also come into this place of torment. This is language the most emphatical and conclusive, to represent the state of human souls in the intermediate, invisible world; for all the circumstances give the most ample testimony, that Lazarus was in heaven, and the rich man in hell, when the Saviour delivered this parable. His request for his brethren, shows that human beings were yet in this world, on probationary ground, liable to come to the same place of torment. Will any one object that this is only a parabolical representation? He will thus speak, only to escape from an argument

which he cannot face. That parables are a figurative representation, is acknowledged. But to assert that the parables of the divine Redeemer, exhibit any thing but truth, is to do an injury to his true character.

St. John, when caught up to heaven in his vision, beheld a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, uniting with the angels in their everlasting song of praise. He asked, who these persons were? The interpreting angel informed him, They were those who came out of great tribulation, and had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, he adds, are they before the throne of God; and serve him, day and night, in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne, shall dwell among them. It will not be denied, that these were men, or the spirits of deceased persons; nor that the time referred to in this passage, must be long antecedent to the resurrection. They were, therefore, separate spirits: conscious, virtuous, happy beings. It may be said, and truly, that all this passed in vision. But it must be added, and must be admitted by those who would say this, that a vision communicated by the Spirit of God, exhibits nothing but what is true.

Moreover, in conformity to this representation of St. John, the apostle Paul says to his brethren, the Thessalonians, If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him; that is, when he comes to the final judgement. But who are those whom God will bring with Christ, at this time? Certainly not the bodies of the Saints. They will be raised from the grave, and cannot be brought with Christ. The only answer, therefore, is, he will bring with him the spirits of just men made perfect. Perhaps the Apostle

had heard that some of the Thessalonian believers had lately died; and that their relatives and brethren had too much sorrow, by not duly attending to the consolations suggested by the gospel. He, therefore, would not have them to be ignorant concerning those who were fallen asleep in Christ, that they were in a safe and happy state.

INFERENCES.

1st. *This subject exhibits the folly of that excessive attention, so commonly bestowed by mankind upon their bodies.*

How is the soul far the most dignified nature! and what momentous consequences, the result of its moral character! Yet, how much of the probationary state, and how great a portion of the care, anxiety, and labour of man, are rendered to the body! Necessity, decency, and comfort, demand a portion of our time and exertions to be employed in favour of our mortal frames. But revelation and reason, do certainly assign limits to this employment. The real good of all our labour under the sun, is the portion which God allows us; and the allowance is indeed liberal and sufficient. Still common sense continually discerns and declares, that manifold anxieties are experienced, and efforts made, which are productive of no such good. It is necessary to have food, and desirable that it be wholesome and pleasant; it is necessary to have clothes, and desirable that they be convenient and becoming. But many are agitated with excessive cares, and consume the chief part of their life, in devising means either to gratify their palate, or to adorn their person.

Is our life the only period of probation; and, during that time, is eternal life to be gained or lost? What madness to waste this little period in providing means of luxury to pamper our bodies, and giving our whole souls to the study of pleasures, which terminate in sorrows! Would the epicure, while feasting his sight, his smell, and taste, on every kind

of viand, remember that he is satiating his flesh, merely to make it a more dainty meal for the worms of the dust, the keenness of his relish might possibly be blunted; and his solicitude concerning what he should eat, and what he should drink, exchanged for a more becoming anxiety concerning the means by which he might live for ever. Were the monarch on his throne, to adorn whom the south has yielded up its gold and the east lavished its gems, to recollect that within a few days he must be wrapped in a shroud and lodged in a grave; would not all these splendours fade upon his eye and pall upon his heart? Were the beauty who animates the dance, or sparkles in the drawing-room, with the conscious superiority of her charms, and amid the homage of surrounding admirers, to call to mind that the form which she surveyed in the glass with rapture, must within a few days be chilled by the icy hand of death; the roses fade from her cheeks, the splendour vanish from her eyes, and all her elegance of form be dissolved in dust, must she not be compelled to believe that her vanity was misplaced and worthless; that she squandered away life upon objects equally undeserving and mischievous; and that to acquire beauty of mind, to become lovely in the sight of God, and to merit the esteem of angels for eternity, were pursuits unspeakably more worthy the supreme regard of a rational, immortal being. Does it become a mortal to dote upon a beautifully animated frame? Let us call to mind of what the Lord made our bodies, and not forget their origin nor their end. He formed them out of earth. He made them so frail as to be subjected to accident, pain, and disease, in ten thousand forms. At death he returns them to earth again. This is their destination; for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Moreover, the more animated and lovely the form, the more ghastly and loathsome its return to corruption and dust.

Wisdom admonishes that we keep our bodies in subjection, and not render them instruments of lasciviousness and unrighteousness. They should not be given to any indulgence, or permitted to execute any purpose incompatible with the dignity and welfare of the rational and immortal spirit by which they are inhabited. Their chief end is to serve as instruments of righteousness to the soul, and to be subservient in preparing it for immortal glory. Hence they should be consecrated as an help-meet to the inward adorning of the mind as their highest honour. They should be presented before God to be employed in his service, and worn out in executing the various purposes of his will, that so they might be wholly devoted to his glory. The soul should not be rendered a slave to the lusts and indulgencies of an animal frame: but the body with its members and senses should readily subserve to the rational purposes, and express the devout affections of the superiour nature. Thus our bodies would become living temples, and our souls consecrated priests in the service of God. Says the apostle Paul, I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. How can these tabernacles of clay be more highly honoured, than to be the happy medium of exalting our spirits to mansions of immortal glory? Or what greater dishonour can we brand upon them, than to have them serve as instruments to prepare the soul for the abodes of darkness and perdition?

2d. *By this subject we are taught the folly and indecency of pride.*

Why should pride, vanity, or ambition, dwell so fondly in a subject so full of frailty and humiliation? They are passions cherished and fondled in the

human breast, and are the most dangerous enemies to our true interests. They were the commencing sin of angels, the real beginning of human apostacy, and constitute a prime part of our rebellion against God.

Pride is a principle source of our injurious treatment of each other; is unkind, unjust, insincere, impatient of the prosperity of others, jealous, hard-hearted, cruel as the grave, arrogating to itself the blessings of mankind and the prerogatives of God, is unbelieving and obdurate. Hence, we need not wonder that it is in every degree pernicious to ourselves. Therefore, says Solomon, Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Although the word and works of God furnish innumerable dissuasives from the indulgence of pride, yet how insufficient are they to overcome this obstinate evil. But the affecting truths contained in the present subject, are happily adapted to this end. When we look around with exultation on the advantages which we fancy ourselves to possess over our fellow-men, and let loose the pride of wealth, the pride of office, the pride of taste, and the pride of reputation; when we turn our eyes upon ourselves with all the dotage exercised by a fond and foolish parent towards a favourite child, and become inflated with the pride of beauty, the pride of talents, or that most odious of all pride which is customarily styled self-righteousness, we can hardly fail of being humbled and abased, if we call to mind the end of all our loftiness exhibited in this discourse.

While walking over the dark and dismal recesses of the burying-ground, on whom do you tread? On the mighty man of war, the judge and the prophet, the prudent and the honourable man, the cunning artificer and the eloquent orator, the slave and his master. Though the one may have a costly tombstone, and the other none; they are all in the abodes of equality, mingled together in the common mass of

dust, an equal prey to corruption, and the insolent, greedy, devouring worm. And is it possible that beings destined to this end should be proud? It is possible; for you and I are proud, though appointed to the same humble, deplorable condition, as that of these dreary tenants of the dead. When, therefore, you contemplate with high self-complacency, the advantages of person which you possess, or the endowments of the mind; when you look down from superiority of birth, riches, character, or influence, on those below you, and your bosoms swell with the consciousness of distinction, remember your end, and be proud no more. Bear in mind that your gayest attire will soon be exchanged for a winding sheet, and your most agreeable and splendid habitation for the grave.

Remember also, that the pride which you now indulge, will, in the future world, become to you a source of the deepest humiliation. In the grave, the beggar and the fool will lie on the same level with you. But, in the invisible state, every humble child of Adam will become your superiour. Unless you renounce your pride, and assume the humility of the gospel, the slave and the beggar in many instances, will rise to a superiority above you, higher than your minds can conceive; and look down upon you with a holy aversion, which, although you will justly deserve, you have never been able to endure. You, in the mean time, will sink to a depth of degradation which your present powers cannot measure; and will feel yourselves lowered to a double depth, by seeing some of those whom hitherto you have only despised, elevated to endless dignity and glory.

Shall the man of pride despise the poor, the ignorant, and the afflicted? They may be the favourites of heaven, and he the child of hell. Shall he dote upon the nobleness of the human frame? Quickly that form will be rendered a ghastly corpse and a most putrid mass. Shall he boast concerning

the dignity of the human soul? An ungodly, proud spirit in man, is a ground for humiliation and deep lamentation. Shall any one be proud in view of his riches and superiour attainments? To that man they are proving temptations, snares, and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. Says the prophet Malachi, Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

3d. *This subject ought to remind us how near the solemn events mentioned in this discourse, are to ourselves.*

There is only a thin veil between any one of us and the world of spirits. That is the veil of death: and nothing but the brittle thread of life prevents the invisible curtain from being drawn, and our souls ascending to heaven or descending to hell. When this slender thread is cut, we shall instantly shout with angels, and glorify God with the spirits of just men made perfect; or rage with devils, and weep and wail with lost souls as their companions in wo. We are every moment of our lives, standing on the brink of eternity and the verge of everlasting joys, or precipice of endless sorrows. A healthy constitution and the greatest prudence to preserve life, are of no avail to warrant security; for when death is commissioned to carry us hence, he regards not the fairest prospects of man. In no age or situation are we exempt from his deadly arrest. The tender infant, as well as the aged; the blooming youth in full strength, as well as the person of delicate constitution, are snatched away as in a moment, when he comes with his fatal mandate.

Our life is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. Moreover, the close of life closes our probationary state, and puts an end to all our enjoyments of things beneath the

sun. And it is but one more step to pass into the eternal world; but the sons of men can never step back again into time; for death, in this respect, is an impassable gulf. And have we eternal consequences depending on the moral characters we form in life? How solemn, then, the reflection that our lives at best are but shadows; that the arrows of death are continually levelled at our hearts; and we, every moment of our mortal existence, liable to be summoned by the king of terrours into the immediate presence of our final Judge, to be awarded according to the deeds done in the body! And when we shall open our eyes on the eternal world, and mark the incomprehensible vast which is before us, how strong will the reasons appear which urged us to prepare ourselves for this amazing existence! How immensely desirable will it seem to enter upon boundless being with a complete provision for our comfort through its interminable ages: a provision which will fill up every passing year with enjoyment, and leave an ample supply for the countless multitude of ages to come!

How soon will the short period of our life be gone! With what rapid flight, hours, and days, and years, hasten over our heads! What is the amount of our past life? A moment. What will be the amount of our days to come? Another moment. And then we shall be summoned to give up our account to God. And who will be our attendants through the dark valley of the shadow of death, angels or devils? Our characters as saints or sinners, will decide whether we be accompanied with the glorious messengers of light, or the fiends of darkness. While in life, we are in the midst of death; and constantly very near the amazing solemnities of eternity.

4th. *This subject shows the propriety of our being solemnly affected in view of the death of our friends and fellow-mortals.*

A variety of solemn and interesting reflections is

naturally suggested. Death itself is a very solemn and affecting thing. It is nature's last extremity; and the soul then stands in need of such support as mortals cannot give. At death, it takes its flight to a world unknown; but, to a world where all the inhabitants are ever active. This is true in regard to both saint and sinner. The soul does not then pass into a state of mental and moral stupidity; but it becomes incessantly active with the powers above, in glorifying God; or, in joining with infernal spirits, in their horrid blasphemies. This solemn and momentous truth is implied in the declaration, The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death. When we contemplate the departure of the soul at death, we may well exclaim,

> But O the soul, that never dies;
> When once it leaves the clay,
> Ye thoughts, pursue it where it flies,
> And trace its wondrous way.
>
> Up to the courts where angels dwell,
> It mounts, triumphing there;
> Or devils plunge it down to hell,
> To infinite despair.

If we see a fellow-mortal swept away by death, whose soul, we may justly fear, is consigned to the region of wo, all is darkness; for the body will be raised to shame and everlasting contempt, to which the guilty and wretched spirit will be re-united as its proper partner. While friends are mourning, the soul of the deceased is lifting up its eyes in torment, and no gleam of light issues in view of the resurrection for consolation.

But if we have a friend leave these mortal shores in the triumphs of faith, all is light; for his very remains are of incalculable value, in the distinction to which they are entitled beyond the grave. The body necessarily follows the destination of the mind. He, therefore, who gains a title to endless life, makes

complete provision for the welfare of the whole man. In the Christian system all good is united; our duty and our interest; the well being of the soul, and that of the body; the blessings of time, and those of eternity. Then may we mourning friends, so love our bodies and desire to preserve and cherish them, that we shall with the most effectual care, secure their revival to immortal honour, and the happiness with which it is connected. And this is to be accomplished not by adorning and pampering them here, in obedience to the calls of pride and luxury; but by seeking effectually the immortal life of those minds by which they are inhabited.

Under what great obligations we all are to Christ, the believer's life and resurrection. Had he not come into this world to die, the just for the unjust, every one of the human race must inevitably have sunk down to eternal death. Mourning friends must then have expected to meet the departing spirit, at the great judgement day, re-united to the raised body, and with it sentenced to everlasting misery. But now there is hope, even in the grave. The sting of death by reason of sin, is taken away from the believer; and he may exclaim, when contemplating the gloomy mansions of the dead, O grave! where is thy victory? The soul will immediately pass into glory to exult with glorified spirits, with patriarchs, prophets, and apostles; with Christ and his holy angels, in the immediate and blessed presence of God. And at the resurrection, the body which was turned to corruption and dust, will be raised and fashioned like unto Christ's own glorious body.

What consolation then for mourners, who have cheering evidence, that their departed friends are gone to the arms of Jesus. The blessed Redeemer stands ever ready to receive the departed spirit of his friends; for he is gone to prepare a place for them: And to his mourning disciples he said, In my Father's house there are many mansions. And are

we lamenting the loss of those who have died the death of the righteous? While we are mourning on the account of their departure, how are their souls rejoicing in heavenly transports, and now participating in joys unspeakable and full of glory. In view then of their unspeakable gain, let us weep for ourselves, and for our children. And may not parents, who have lost a tender infant, resign the soul to the grace and compassion of the Redeemer? Christ took little children in his arms, while on earth, and blessed them; and why may he not receive such into his arms in glory? Certainly the Lord may grant the sanctifying influences of his Holy Spirit, even to infants, and make them meet to be partakers with saints in light.

How comforting that neither abject poverty, malicious enemies, nor grim death, can pluck the soul of a believer from the hands of the divine Redeemer! Did the blessed Jesus frown in view of the ascension of the poor, despised beggar to a mansion of glory? No: as an eternal monument of honour, it will be proclaimed, He was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

5th. *This subject naturally calls to our mind, how affecting and melancholy it is to witness the death of an impenitent sinner.*

There is not only reason for unbelievers to tremble at the prospect of their departure hence; but their surviving friends also may justly have their hearts quake, as they stand around their dying bed. Their distracted countenances, and dreadful exclamations, pierce the stoutest heart, and rend the souls of their relatives. As they view death fast approaching, in agony they break out, Hast thou found me, Oh! mine enemy! Must I be forced away? dread, cruel messenger! Oh! precious lost time! Oh! deluded, murdered soul! Now, now, I feel the cold, icy hand of death, preying upon my whole body. And ah! see merciless fiends greedy to seize my guilty, des-

pairing spirit. Oh, my friends! Oh, my God! Am I eternally undone? Must I be plunged in wo, with awful expectation of more terrible vengeance being poured upon me, after the judgement! Oh, that God would be gracious, and strike out my existence? Can he not hear my accursed prayers and grant me annihilation? are all my enjoyments for ever at an end; and is hope gone for ever! I am chilled with death: my blood cold in my veins: my senses racked: my soul distracted. Adieu, vain world. Farewell my friends! I am already sinking in eternal despair, and overwhelmed in torments without end.

How faint this description of an impenitent, dying sinner! But how affecting, how solemn, and how awful the departure of unbelievers, which will consign their wretched souls to that dreadful world, where reign the mists of the blackness of darkness for ever! Our souls may justly shudder at the thought of beholding a fellow-mortal thus expiring.

6th. *How blessed the sight to behold a believer leave this world in peace.*

The body dies; but glorious the release of the soul, in its departure from these mortal shores. Believers at death, do indeed experience an affecting change in regard to their bodies; still the soul can triumph in prospect of a blessed immortality. They then enter a new state of existence; are instantly surrounded with new and surprising objects, which excite the most transporting admiration. When a mortal paleness overspreads the dying frame, glory divine beams upon the soul. The departing saint, with death on one hand and his God on the other, in full view, exclaims in ecstasy, Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee: My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. O my dear children! beloved wife and friends! what mean ye weeping for me, and breaking my heart? My divine Redeemer calls; are you not willing to

have me fall asleep in Jesus? Hark! Hear the whispering angels! See the white shining train! They beckon me away: I must go up to heaven. O, prospect bright and glorious! The unclouded morning of eternal day, bursts upon my sight. Farewell, my friends. Adieu, cares of the world; sin and sorrow. Come, Lord Jesus! come. Now, all glory to God, and the Lamb that sitteth on the throne. How great the change; how solemn, and transporting the departure of believers, who have full assurance of being ushered into the immediate presence of God, to be placed at his right hand, where is fulness of joy, and rivers of pleasure for evermore. What prospect to mortals can be more consoling! what event more glorious!

7th. *This subject admonishes that we make daily preparation for the solemn events, and momentous consequences which await us.*

It is not only a solemn thing to die, but death comes often in an unexpected hour. And if we be unprepared at his coming, it would be good for us had we never been born. Our souls and our bodies will both serve to render our existence wretched. Shortly it will be said of each one of us, that we are dead. Shortly our dust will return to the earth as it was; and our spirits shall return to God, who gave them. And are we prepared each one of us to give up his account to God? The amazing end of this interview will be to settle the concerns of the soul for ever, and fix its condition for interminable ages. On this account, is suspended endless happiness or endless misery. And can we guilty beings render our account with joy, unless we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the Righteous? How affecting must be the situation of the soul at this decisive interview! to stand in the presence of God, the Judge of all, alone; without a friend to help, without an advocate to plead its cause; its all depending, itself to receive its eternal destina-

tion! And now let me ask, Have we that well-grounded hope, upon which we are willing to hazard the acceptance of our souls for immortality? Or has our whole course hitherto been directed, shall it through life be directed towards perdition, and not a single step taken towards heaven? Rather, infinitely rather, let us be wise, lay up for ourselves treasures which will remain durable; immortal treasures, when these visible heavens and this earth shall be no more. Let us as miserable, penitent sinners, fly to the Saviour, make the Judge our friend: He is our rewarder: His frown is hell, His smile is heaven. To him let us give all glory for evermore. *Amen.*

SERMON XXIII.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE HUMAN BODY, A WONDERFULLY GLORIOUS CHANGE.

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1 Corinthians xv. 53.

This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

THE grand theme of this chapter, is the general resurrection of the dead. And the subject is so discussed as to exhibit one of the first specimens of that expansion and sublimity of intellect, for which St. Paul is peculiarly distinguished. Nothing in heathen antiquity can be found among poets, orators, or philosophers, which in loftiness of conception, or extensiveness of views, deserves to be named in comparison with this discourse. From its commencement, and throughout all its progress, the writer gradually ascends higher and higher in his descriptions, until he elevates the mind of his reader to the heavens.

In the beginning of the chapter, the resurrection of the body is asserted and proved. The proof alledged, is the resurrection of Christ. The argument may be advantageously exhibited in the following manner: Christ predicted his own resurrection, and actually rose in the manner predicted. He has thus proved both his power to do every thing, and his veracity in all his declarations. But he has declared that he will raise up at the last day, all that are in their graves. Thus his own resurrection is a complete proof of the general resurrection of mankind.

The Apostle pursues the examination of the subject,

by putting an objection against a future state, into the mouth of an opponent, derived from apprehended difficulties concerning the future existence of the body. The objection is indeed without weight; as it is merely an expression of the objector's ignorance concerning the subject, and his inability to imagine what kind of body, or by what means any body can be united to the soul, in the future world. But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? The source of perplexity with regard to the question, appears to be, whether the same body will be raised. If the query be, whether the same atoms which have composed our bodies in the present world, will constitute the body raised at the final day, both reason and revelation evince the contrary. The whole number of particles, which have at different times constituted the body of a man during his progress through life, will undoubtedly be sufficient to constitute many such bodies. The answer to the objector in relation to this question, is the following: Thou fool, that which thou sowest, is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain; it may chance of wheat or some other grain. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. So also is the resurrection of the dead. Thus we are taught, that even the ordinary productions of the earth, exhibited a process which might illustrate the subject: for the seed sown in the ground does not vegetate, except it corrupt and die. This is true: for whatever change transfers a body into a new class of beings, may be justly called the death of the original substance. And in fact, the seed as such, dieth: for it ceases to remain an original grain of corn or of wheat; though a part of it springs, as it were, into new life, by a process which we can no more fully conceive, than we can the manner of the resurrection. Thus the bodies of believers, after corrupting and turning to

dust, will be raised into a new and more glorious form; not in every respect the same that they were, but far superiour and more excellent. Still, the identity of the same particles of matter, as necessary to the resurrection of the same body, is no where mentioned in the sacred volume. Moreover, the instruction contained in the present chapter, seems to militate against such an opinion. The Lord hath many other ways of preserving personal identity. Besides, exactly the same particles do not constitute our bodies, for two hours together, in any part of our lives; yet we are the same persons, both in body and soul, from childhood till old age.

Again: If the same constitution, arrangement, and qualities of the body be intended by the question, it is equally evident that the same body will not be raised. This is decisively taught in the following declaration: Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Thus the human body in its present form of subsistence, and with its present animal wants, propensities, and infirmities, cannot partake of the pure and refined enjoyments of the kingdom of glory: Nor can the body, as mortal and corruptible, inherit the incorruptible and unchangeable felicity of heaven. Moreover, reason would decide to a certainty, that a constitution which involves in its nature, decay and termination, cannot belong to a body destined for the residence of an immortal and ever vigorous mind.

The Apostle, to illustrate the present subject, refers to the variety as well as the wonderful nature of the works of God, in the flesh of different animals as well as the form of vegetables, differently constituted, produced, and supported. Yet we cannot comprehend the manner in which the Lord hath made and preserves this difference; though it is evidently intended to fit them for their several kinds of life, their diverse elements, and various destinations.

Cannot he then raise our bodies, suited to the state intended for them, consistently with our personal identity, though in a manner inexplicable to us? The great diversity of animal natures should serve to teach us, that there will be, in various respects, a vast difference in the human body in the resurrection.

We are also taught that the same wisdom and power of God hath formed celestial, as well as terrestrial bodies; but the celestial appear far more splendid than the terrestrial: Yet, even among the former, there are different degrees of glory, as they are in themselves, and as they appear to us. The sun is far more glorious than the moon; yet the reflected light of the moon, far exceeds that of the remote stars; and even some of them shine more brightly than others. Thus also will it be in the resurrection of the dead: The bodies of the righteous will appear as much more glorious than they now do, as the glory of the heavenly luminaries excels that of an opaque clod of the earth; yet they will shine with different degrees of splendour, as do the sun, moon, and stars.

After this illustration, the Apostle dwells extensively on the nature of the body with which those who are dead, will be invested at the final day. He also declares the change which those who are living at that time will experience, and concludes with a song of triumph over death and the grave.

Now it may be remarked, against the resurrection itself there is no presumption; and in favour of it, a presumptive argument may be derived from analogy. Many things pertaining to this world, naturally and strongly dispose the mind to admit the doctrine. In this climate, almost the whole vegetable world dies annually under the chilling influence of winter. At the return of spring the face of nature is renewed; and all the plants, shrubs, and trees, with which it was adorned, are again clothed with verdure, life,

and beauty. From the appearance of winter, when nature is clad with the habiliments of death, who could expect that she would ever revive and live again, unless taught to believe it from what has so often taken place?

In the insect creation, we find a direct and striking example of the manner of the resurrection itself. Many of the animals of this class, begin their existence in the form of worms. After continuing some time in the humble state of being to which they are necessarily confined by their structure, they die and are gone. In the moment of death, they construct for themselves a species of shell, in which they may with the strictest propriety, be said to be entombed. Here they are dissolved into a mass of semi transparent water: the whole, which remains of the previously existing animal, exhibiting to the eye no trace of life, and no promise of a future revival. After remaining in a dead or torpid state, until the term of its burial approaches to its proper period, the tomb discloses, and a winged animal comes forth with a nobler form, often exquisitely beautiful; brilliant with the gayest splendour, possessed of new and superiour powers, and destined to a more refined and more exalted life. Its food is now the honey of flowers; its field of being, the atmosphere. Here it expatiates at large in the delightful exercise of its newly discovered faculties, and in the high enjoyment of those sun-beams, which were the immediate means of its newly acquired existence.

Now let us bear in mind, that in the various changes of existence of forms and faculties, the insect is considered the same; though it has assumed to itself life and death, and even different natures. Hence we may discern, in the essentially different state of existence, by reason of a wonderful change and transformation, a type of the resurrection of the human body. Through life the human frame is constantly changing; and at the sound of the last trump

it will experience a most amazing change, though identity will be one of its attributes. The seed that is cast into the earth, after being sown or planted, apparently is dead; yet it springs up, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. The acorn that falls to the ground, corrupts, vegetates, and becomes a mighty oak. The examples which have been noticed, bear a great analogy to the death, burial, and resurrection of the human body. Still it should be remarked, in a certain respect there is a difference. They are all effected by the power of God, according to his established laws of nature; but the resurrection will be the effect of his divine power exerted beyond any such law, or stated course of operation. Let these observations suffice as illustrations of the present subject, derived from the system of nature, exhibited to our view in the present state of things.

Let us now attend to the instruction of the divine word, more particularly in regard to the present subject.

Job thus expresses himself with the fullest assurance of its truth. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another, though my reins be consumed within me. As to Job himself, though his body would be consumed by putrefaction, yet he should be raised from the dead, and behold his God and Saviour. Him he should certainly behold for himself, not only as the object of mental contemplation, but with his own eyes in his own body raised from the dead, and not in another.

St. John does most strikingly describe the resurrection and future state. He informs us, that the time was approaching, when all the innumerable multitude of the dead would hear the voice of the Son of

God, calling them to arise and come to judgement: So that wheresoever their bodies were dispersed and turned to dust, they would be immediately raised up and come forth, either to life or to damnation, according as their works had been. Hear his emphatical declaration: Marvel not; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

The apostle Paul, when standing before Felix, the governour of Judea, fully avows the doctrine under consideration. He says, This I confess unto thee; so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. The Apostle was free to confess, that he worshipped the God of his fathers; that he believed the doctrines and promises both of the law and the prophets, concerning the Messiah; and that he expected a future resurrection of both the just and the unjust, as the Jews in general allowed.

Let us now attend to the argumentative manner of the Apostle in his address to the Corinthians. A small portion of his arguments exhibits various considerations as undeniable proof of the doctrine of the general resurrection of the dead.

Now if Christ be preached, that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if

Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished. If in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming.

This chain of the Apostle's argument is highly interesting and most conclusive. Having established the fact of Christ's resurrection, from that fact he shows the certainty of our resurrection.

And let me remark, that identity itself makes it necessary that our mortal bodies should be raised. Moreover if the same bodies should not be raised, there would in reality be no resurrection; but a new creation of bodies. Besides, it appears fit and suitable, that those bodies which were the instruments of righteousness or unrighteousness, should be raised and made the partners of the soul in happiness or misery. And though the bodies, which will be raised, will not differ from what they now are in regard to their substance, yet they will differ exceedingly in respect to their qualities and attributes. The bodies of the righteous and wicked will have a momentous difference in one point of view; for of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, they shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Then whatever strength and immortality shall be put upon the bodies of the wicked, they will serve only to make them instruments of endless pains. But St. Paul, in the words of the text and context, is describing particularly the glorious change that shall take place in the bodies of the saints, when they shall be raised. And now this part of the subject demands our attention.

The first thing to be noticed, is that the body will be raised incorruptible. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. The body as a descendant of dying Adam, during its mortal state, and as laid in the grave, is sown in corruption: it tends to corruption; and after death, it is speedily wasted and decayed. But at the resurrection, it will be raised in incorruption, without any seeds of mortality, disease, or decay in its constitution. One of the most striking characteristicks of the human body in its present state, is its universal tendency to decay. This tendency appears, and often fatally, in its earliest existence, and at every succeeding stage of its progress. It is, however, most visible and affecting, after it has passed the middle point of life. Then decay arrests it in many forms, and with irresistible power: Then the limbs gradually stiffen, the faculties lose their vigour, the strength declines, the face becomes overspread with wrinkles, and the head with the locks of age. Health, at the same time, recedes by degrees, even from the firmest constitution: Pains multiply, feebleness and languor lay hold on the whole system; and death at length seizes the frame as his prey, and changes it to corruption and dust. As it is appointed unto man once to die, so from the cradle to the tomb, he is constantly liable and tending to his dissolution.

But a mighty and glorious difference will be made in our nature, when the body revives beyond the grave. All the evils and accidents which befal it in the present world, will then have lost their power. Hunger, thirst, weakness, declension, death, and corruption, are bounded by the tomb. The grave is their everlasting termination. They that rise to the resurrection of life, will hunger no more neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. Firm, enduring, unassailable by distress, and proof against the undermining progress of years, they will like gold tried in the fire, remain bright and

indestructible, through the endless succession of ages.

The bodies of our first parents, before their apostacy, were not liable to disease and death. Had they not sinned, they would never have seen corruption. Their food, the air, and all things around them, would then have tended only to preserve their animal frames from destruction. Still their bodies would have been flesh and blood for ever; unless at some period of their existence, they should have experienced a wonderful change. But the human body in the resurrection, will be far more refined in its substance, and possess attributes far superiour to what it did even in paradise. Moreover, the region of its everlasting destination is inconceivably better adapted to prevent decay and corruption, and to promote vigour and incorruption, than were the salubrious gales that fanned the garden of Eden. Both the nature and condition of a glorified body, become its eternal safeguards from the diseases and infirmities to which our mortal frames are constantly subject. Thus its very attributes and situation will for ever render it far removed from dissolution; and will serve to perpetuate, for eternal ages, its highly exalted nature of a glorious incorruption.

2d. *The body will be raised immortal. This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

The terms incorruptible and immortal, in various respects might be illustrated as synonymous expressions. But although their import in general is the same, still there is a sense in which there is a difference. An incorruptible body, although it cannot perish by decay and dissolution, may notwithstanding be annihilated. An immortal body will know no end, either from its own weakness or from external power. Such has God been pleased to constitute the bodies of his children beyond the grave. Death to them shall be no more. In defiance of time and

superiour to injury, the body will live with him for ever and ever.

Hence, though incorruption and immortality are attributes so nearly allied as not easily to be separated in their illustrations, still they may be considered only as kindred attributes, and not both entirely the same. As both the declaration of Heaven, and the circumstances of the human frame, in the present state, evince the mortality of the body, so both the will of God and the attributes of a glorified body, will secure its immortality. As the soul is destined in its nature and by Divine appointment to immortality, so in the resurrection the body will become immortal as the soul. And as in the present state the body is inevitably corruptible and mortal, so in the future state it will be raised to put on incorruption and immortality.

3d. *The body at the resurrection, will be arrayed in glory. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.*

To have these animated, useful bodily frames become lifeless and turn to corruption, is an affecting consideration. How humiliating the thought, that these mechanically organized temples of our spirits, should be changed into a loathsome, disorganized mass, to be reduced to atoms by the devouring worm! How is the pride of man laid low and his glory departed, when the king of terrours consigns his body to the grave!

But the resurrection announces a release to the degraded captive from the power of the grim tyrant, and exclaims, O grave! where is thy victory? And now let us notice how glorious must be the triumph to the dishonoured prisoner. But for this we must have some just conception of the greatness of the change in being restored to liberty, and raised to a state of exaltation. Says the Apostle to his brethren, the Philippians, in view of this subject, We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his

glorious body, according to the power whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. How mysterious and wonderful the change, when the body of our humiliation will be fashioned anew; that it may become of the like form with the glorified body of the Lord Jesus!

On the mount of transfiguration, Christ appeared to Peter, James, and John, in his glorious body; and then, as the Evangelists inform us, His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment became white and glistering. In Revelation we have a more ample exhibition of the same illustrious object; in some respects emblematical, but in all sublime and glorious beyond a parallel. And being turned, I John, saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand, seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. Of the supreme splendour of this appearance, how high must our conceptions rise, when we hear St. John subjoin, And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. In the wonderful change at the resurrection, St. Paul observes, there shall be a display of energy; that is, of power and skill, like that by which Christ subdues all things unto himself. What a transformation must that be which these poor, frail, perishable bodies will experience when the full import of this prediction shall be accomplished! How exceedingly is such a change to be desired by beings like ourselves; subject as we are to pain and disease, decay and death!

By reason of sin and the consequent curse de-

nounced upon man during life, at death, and in the grave, the body is sown in dishonour. Its mortal existence somewhat resembles the state of a condemned criminal. Various sufferings and diseases are the forerunners of the execution which takes place at death, with much ignominy. And the putrid, wasting state of a dead body, is very dishonourable in itself; though the death and burial of Christ have consecrated the grave to all believers, and his resurrection hath assured us that the body shall be raised in glory. But how honourable will be the triumph over death and the grave, when the body will be rendered most beautiful and glorious, resembling the glorious body of the Lord Jesus himself, who is the first born from the dead.

Besides, the body itself being raised in glory, the divine glories with which it will be constantly presented, will serve to render its appearance still more glorious. This was the effect on the countenance of Moses in beholding the glory of the Lord on mount Sinai. Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone, while he talked with him. But when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come nigh him. And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. As the light of the sun causes even opaque bodies on which it shines to appear luminous, so the special contemplation of the divine glory caused an irradiation of the soul of Moses, which was marvellously represented to the people by this external brightness of his countenance. And though he was not conscious of the splendour of his face, yet it was too resplendent for the people to behold; therefore he covered it with a veil when he spoke to them. But if a temporary view of the feebler displays of the divine glory produces such a lustre in the countenance of a mortal, what must be the effect of the full glories of the heavenly world upon a glorified body?

4th. *The body will be raised in power. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.*

In the future world, the righteous serve God day and night in his temple: That is, they serve him without cessation or rest; and need, of course, faculties fitted to the performance of these services; faculties, whose vigour the magnitude of no duty shall overcome, and no continuance of action fatigue or impair. Originally destined for an existence of this nature, the powers of the body will correspond with the activity of the mind; and will sustain without injury, defect, or decay, every undertaking which it is required to achieve, and will accomplish every work with enjoyment growing out of its exertions. Instead of being exhausted or weakened, it seems evident from the sacred scriptures, that its strength as well as its other attributes, will, like those of the mind, advance towards a higher and higher perfection throughout the ages of eternity.

We are constantly reminded that our mortal bodies are sown in weakness; for our manifold infirmities and death, in which they terminate, are peculiar evidences of human imbecility. And the state of the body as shrouded, buried, and over-run by the most hateful worms, shows most affectingly how little all the power and abilities of men can do for them. But the body of a believer will not only be raised by Almighty power, it will also be endued with a power of which we have no conception, and be rendered capable of such motions and of producing such effects as surpass whatever we have seen, heard, or even imagined. It was the unanimous sentiment of the Patriarchs, that no man could see God and live: That is, that no mortal could endure the full view of the glories of the invisible world. The word of God does indeed import, that if the splendours of the heavenly state were exhibited to our view, the sight, so transcendently glorious, would so overwhelm us as to cause the dissolution of soul and body. With

what strength, then, must glorified bodies be endued, unceasingly to behold the full displays of all the divine glories as they shine forth in the kingdom of heaven!

And are they for ever and ever to be most actively employed in the service of God without weariness or rest? What an amazing contrast compared with our weak, perishable bodies! A difference as vast as that of a natural day, when contrasted with an eternal day. Our mortal frames are daily so accustomed to fatigue and to the necessity of rest, that we can scarcely conceive it possible for them to be so changed as to be for ever freed from these, and invested with a power which is never weakened. And with what immortal vigour must they be endued, to be ever awake and uninterruptedly engaged in the manifold service of God, without a sensation of weariness, or the least desire of cessation from their employments! Shall eternal ages, indeed, make no impression on them to create fatigue and produce a tendency to weakness? No; eternity, with all its growing obligations and magnified duties, will only serve to render them more and more vigourous, and perpetuate their attribute of power with continued increase and exaltation. Power eternally rising higher and higher in vigour and glory.

5th. *The body will at the resurrection be endued with great activity.*

Various arguments might be adduced to establish this proposition. Both the perfection and employments of the future state will require the power of action the most consummate. In the world of glory, all is life and activity of the most perfect nature. No wearisomeness nor inactivity has ever been permitted to enter the abodes of the blessed. In the present state, inaction and slothfulness are characteristicks of the human frame. But how changed the scene in the resurrection, when the human body will be endued with the attribute of perpetual activity and

vigilance! How essential to a mortal body are constant cessations from labour and periods of rest, that it may be enabled to perform the various duties of life! But a glorified body is so constituted as to be for ever on the wing; unceasingly engaged in employments which demand the highest degree of attention and activity.

The Saviour declares concerning the righteous in the future state, that they are as the angels of God in heaven: That is, possessing in a near and kindred degree, the attributes which they possess. Accordingly, in the fourth chapter of Revelation, we are taught that the four and twenty elders, the representatives of the ancient and modern churches, are placed round about the throne, together with the Four Living ones, the representatives of the angelick host. The resemblance here exhibited, is such as strongly to exemplify this declaration of Christ. Their station is substantially the same: their employments the same.

The activity of angels is disclosed to us by the sacred canon in many passages, and in language of the greatest force. The ninth chapter of Daniel, particularly, contains in relation to these glorious intelligences, a remarkable illustration of this subject. Here we are told that Gabriel received a command in heaven, while Daniel was employed in prayer, to interpret his vision; and that being caused to fly swiftly, he touched Daniel about the time of the evening oblation. The activity here declared, is plainly superiour both to conception and calculation; and exceeds that of the sunbeams beyond any proportion perceptible by our minds. Similar to this representation will be the activity of the righteous in the future world.

In our present state, we are like worms of the dust, slowly and humbly creeping upon the earth appointed for our habitation. With how much exertion, and with what slow progress we go from place to

place! How sluggish and slow-motioned are we mortals!

Still, to act is the end of all rational existence; and to act at pleasure, the necessary concomitant of happy existence. Like Moses and Elias, if we obtain a part in the first resurrection, we may hereafter visit distant worlds with incomparably more ease, than we can now pass from one continent to another, and find the ocean of space by which they are separated, merely means of illustrating our activity and furnishing delightful opportunities of expatiating at our pleasure.

Is all heaven unceasingly active? Do all the spirits of that blessed place, glow with raptures of divine love the most consummate? And have glorified bodies a nature the most vigorous? Then who can conceive how great and glorious will be their activity during the countless ages of eternity!

6th. *The body at the resurrection will, of course, be invested with the character of endless youth.*

The fore-mentioned attributes united, establish a complete basis to form this delightful characteristick. The remarks which have been already made, tend strongly to establish the truth of the present proposition.

For illustration let me observe, that the angels who appeared to Mary and the Apostles after the resurrection of Christ, were, although created several thousand years before, still young; and were regarded by them at first, as being young men. On them, duration in this respect, makes no impression. Ages roll their years away, and leave them as they found them in the bloom of youth which shall continue for ever. Such is the character of all the people of God beyond the grave.

In the present state, old age comes on apace with a gloomy train of infirmities. Within a few years, the body goes bending and tottering to the tomb. The whole frame announces that time is encroach-

ing to prostrate its vigour, beauty, and activity in the dust. But how glorious the contrast of the human body, when it rises in the morn of the resurrection! Vigour, beauty, and eternal youth then triumph over every infirmity of time and old age. Instead of being worn out with years and rendered cumbersome, duration will serve to invigorate the bodies of the righteous and render their youth more and more the perfection of beauty. The place, the company, and the glorified spirit, will excite inconceivable vivacity. No impression or sensation will ever mar the youthful vigour of a glorified body, but all things will inspirit and advance its youth to higher degrees of perfection for ever and ever.

7th. *The body raised, will be a spiritual body. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.*

The body here sown, is a natural or animal body: That is, it resembles the bodies of animals in its original, its wants, appetites, pains, and diseases; and after death, turns to dust as do other animal bodies. But hereafter it will be raised a spiritual body, capable of the spiritual work, worship, and happiness of heaven. Being entirely refined from all its sensual dross and low desires, it needs no more food, rest, sleep, or recreation; is no longer in a state to enjoy animal pleasures, and no more a hindrance to the soul in its holy exercises. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body: the one suited to our state on earth, the other to the heavenly state.

By a natural or animal body, is intended the present body of man, depending for its continuance upon the principle of animal life; the subject of innumerable frailties, and making a regular progress to dissolution. Of a spiritual body it is not, perhaps, in our power to form an adequate conception. Some have supposed it to be a body, which, having no need of the animal functions, was preserved in life by the mere inhabitation of the mind. Doubtless,

the remarks already made, have pointed out the various attributes pertaining to a spiritual body.

In the following verses, this important subject is treated in a fervent and sublime strain. After declaring that there is a spiritual body as well as an animal one, the Apostle illustrates the declaration by observing, That the first Adam was made a living soul; the last, a quickening spirit. That the first was of the earth, earthy: the second, the Lord from heaven. That they who are earthy, are like the earthy Adam: and they who are heavenly, like the heavenly Adam. And that as we have borne the image of the earthy, so we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. This quickening energy does not relate merely to the souls of believers, for Christ will also quicken their mortal bodies by his Spirit, that dwelleth in them; and this is what is here principally intended. Thus, they would not only bear the image of the heavenly Adam in their souls, but in their bodies also, which would be raised very different from their present appearance and capacities, and rendered glorious. We are next informed, that they who are alive at the sounding of the last trumpet, must necessarily undergo a change of the same nature as that which the dead will experience, and which is described in the preceding part of the chapter.

Hence we may see, that a spiritual body will in its nature, possess powers of life totally superiour to those which we now possess, being destined to resemble, in this respect, the quickening Spirit whose image it will bear. None of its organs will prove temptations to sin, as in the present world; but all of them will be wonderful aids to holiness. The sacred scriptures do frequently represent this circumstance as an essential distinction between that which is natural or animal, and that which is spiritual.

A spiritual body will also possess organs of perception and enjoyment of a far higher and more

noble nature than those with which we are now furnished. Like Moses and Elias, the glorified man may be able without danger of mistake, to direct his way from the highest heavens to the distant regions of the universe. Moreover, the attributes of the body will generally so resemble those of the mind, as to render the epithet spiritual, the proper description of its nature. Like the mind, it may inherently contain the principles of life and the seeds of immortality.

At the resurrection, the human body will doubtless, not only be greatly changed as to the quality of its substance, but also in regard to its form. There must be a great difference as it respects the organs and faculties of the body. Some that are necessary in the present state, will be useless in the future; and probably others, then become essential, will be substituted. In the future state, there will be no propagation of the human species; neither will there be necessity of food, as in the present state, for the support of the body. Hence, wonderfully changed must be the faculties and form of a spiritual body.

Perhaps we may consider the peculiar essence, or particular attribute of the epithet *spiritual*, as the climax or highest perfection of a glorified body, in relation to the forementioned qualities and attributes. It is that which will render in the highest degree perfect, the attributes of incorruption, immortality, glory, power, activity, and youth. How much it will be assimilated to a glorified spirit in its nature, employments, and enjoyments, cannot be determined. No doubt its spiritual attribute will be that refined and glorious quality which will be the nearest resemblance of those exalted beings that compose the kingdom of glory.

INFERENCES.

1st. *If objections be advanced against the doctrine of the resurrection, they must be groundless.*

God is a being of almighty power, consequently

can do whatsoever pleaseth him. He has created, or given positive existence; produced something, of which there was nothing. And surely, he who created the world and formed human bodies out of the dust of the ground, is able to raise the same when they become inanimate, and inspirit them with superiour life and vigour. It is not a difficult work for Omnipotence to form lifeless, scattered particles of matter into an organized body, endued with all the glorious attributes of immortality. Is any thing too hard for the Almighty? No: though we may greatly err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

Although we cannot determine what particular particles are necessary to constitute the same body, yet we may rest assured that the Lord can, and that he will raise those which are essential. We do not hesitate to say we have now the same bodies which we inhabited in childhood, although they may have but few of those numerical particles. And though our bodies die and mingle with the dust, yet the omniscient and omnipotent God can determine with absolute certainty what particles and peculiarities constitute the basis and essence of identity, and from their inherent qualities will form a regular, glorified body.

We are not capable of distinguishing bodies by the particles, of which they are composed, but by figure, size, and features; and when our bodies shall be raised at the last day, we shall undoubtedly be conscious, that they are the same bodies we inhabited whilst here on earth. And though this doctrine is mysterious, far above our comprehension, still this is no objection against its being a divine truth. The philosophy of the vegetation and growth of plants and trees, is as really incomprehensible to us as the doctrine of the resurrection. When grain is committed to the earth, we cannot comprehend how the stalk shoots up and produces grain; but we are

confident, that seeds thus committed, die, vegetate, and bring forth their same kind in abundance. Now, who is the man, that can tell whether all, or a part, or whether any of the essential particles of the grain sown, compose that which is reaped?

All objections against the doctrine of the resurrection are unreasonable. Its denial is an article of infidelity. The Sadducees denied and opposed it; though the Apostles were its strenuous advocates. At this day, some deny it; whilst others are earnestly contending and proving from the scriptures, that there will be a resurrection of the dead both of the just and unjust. Some affirm that it is not necessary for the bodies of the dead to be raised, as the soul is the prime agent both of the righteous and wicked. Hence, they imagine other bodies or forms, may as well be prepared for the everlasting dwelling of the soul. But such a supposition is contrary to both reason and divine revelation.

2d. *The doctrine of the resurrection exhibits an important specimen of the consistency of divine revelation, in view of the different parts of this great system.*

The gospel every where discloses to us illustrious things, concerning the future happiness and glory of the mind; and at the same time, teaches us that it will be re-united to the body in the future world. The least reflection, however, will convince us that such bodies as we now possess, must be very unsuitable mansions for minds, destined to be thus glorious and happy. The mind is prepared for an elegant mansion. Such a body as our mortal frame, could only become its prison. The resurrection that divine light discovers to us, that the body shall be fitted to become the habitation of a sanctified and immortal mind, and prove to it a most useful and delightful companion throughout eternity. Here we learn, that the body will be suited to all the perceptions, employments, and glories of the mind; and that the soul in the possession of this residence, will

become more exalted and blessed. Thus this part of the Christian system, is exactly proportioned to the rest, and strongly illustrative of the wisdom and goodness of its author.

3d. *The doctrine of the resurrection is a doctrine of revelation only.*

To the standard of divine truth we must bring our sentiments in relation to this subject, to determine whether they be correct or not. Of this doctrine not a trace can be found in all the investigations of philosophy. It must, indeed, be acknowledged to lie beyond the reach of reason; and in its very nature, to be hidden from the most scrutinizing inquiry. The resurrection itself is an event, depending absolutely on the will, as well as on the power of God: And what he will choose to do with respect to this subject, no being but himself can determine.

Yet no doctrine, devised by philosophy concerning man, is so sublime, so delightful, or so fitted to furnish consolation and hope to beings whose life in this world is but a moment, and whose end is the grave. All who have gone before him, have pointed their feet to its silent chambers; and not one of them returned, to announce that an opening has been discovered from their dreary residence, to some other more lightsome and more desirable region. No lamp illumines the midnight within. In absolute despair, he calls upon philosophy to cheer his drooping mind; but he calls in vain. She has no consolations for herself; and can therefore, administer none to him. Here, she coldly and sullenly cries, is the end of man! From nothing he sprang: to nothing he returns. All that remains of him is dust, which here is mingled for ever with its native earth.

At this sullen moment of despair, Revelation approaches; and with a command, at once awful and delightful, exclaims, Lazarus, come forth! We shall not all sleep; but we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; for the trumpet shall

sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Divine revelation alone avers, that at the end of time, immediately preceding the general judgement, all that shall then be on earth or in their graves, shall come forth; and every soul and body of the whole human family be summoned before the judgement-seat of Christ.

4th. *Wisdom admonishes to a preparation for the future well-being of the body.*

The human frame, in view of the distinction to which it is entitled beyond the grave, is of incalculable value. Then let none of its members serve as instruments of unrighteousness unto iniquity, but of righteousness unto holiness. Let not our concern be to make provision for the lusts of the flesh; but for the wonderful attributes of a glorified body. Let not the temporal, but the eternal welfare of these frail tabernacles be motives to direct our ways. Let them not be degraded by any base deed; but let us so love, nourish, and cherish them, that we shall with the most effectual care, secure their revival to all that distinction and enjoyment which a blessed resurrection gloriously proffers.

5th. *We are encouraged to entertain the highest apprehensions concerning the future glory of the mind.*

If the resurrection will produce such great and delightful things for the inferiour nature; what must we suppose will be the future allotments of the mind, in its nature imperishable and eternal? The utmost efforts of human imagination cannot equal the future glory of the body, as revealed in the word of God. How exceedingly abundant, then, above all that we are able to ask or think, will the mind be exalted, adorned, and enraptured by Him whose glory and delight it is to bless, and who has already enstamped it with his own glorious image. In

the world of glory, the mind united to a spiritual body, will perceive more clearly, enjoy more exquisitely, and act more gloriously, than it would do, if disembodied. This subject may not only be improved by way of inference, to show that the souls of the righteous will be hereafter completely blessed; but incomparably, inconceivably glorious.

6th. *This subject is no ground of comfort, but of alarm to the ungodly and impenitent.*

Terrible thought to all unrighteous, unbelieving sinners, that at the resurrection the bodies of all the unjust will come forth from their graves, like guilty prisoners and condemned criminals, to be a source of additional woes to the soul for ever and ever! Has the Lord given some of you, my hearers, healthful and active frames? and do you dote upon their vigour and beauty? Does the framer of your bodies call upon you to employ them in his service? and have you never bowed the knee, nor turned your eyes, nor extended your hands towards heaven in prayer? Do you say your tongues are your own? And are your hearts so filled with self-importance, that you scorn to use your lips as suppliants, in addressing the throne of divine grace for mercy, and pleading earnestly for the pardon of your sins? Does the blessed Redeemer admonish you, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness? and do you make it your main concern to ornament the body? accounting its pleasures as your chief joy? Alas! what folly and madness, so to think and act, as most fatally to ruin the body, and your immortal souls! Notwithstanding all your care and indulgence of your mortal frames, if you die in impenitence they will be raised to shame and everlasting contempt. If they come forth with the attributes of incorruption, strength, and activity, they will express with awful horrour, the direful passions and torments of your wretched existence. They will not lessen, but augment your intolerable eternal pains. Doleful

reflection! to endure the curses of the God of heaven, in your souls and bodies for ever and ever, without any mixture of mercy! Those bodies which appear in the house of God, in the time of his solemn worship, in a careless and indecent manner, will be far from levity when summoned to the judgement. The wicked will be filled with horrour, when their eyes shall behold the Lord Jesus revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Those ears that now listen to the enchanting sounds of temptation and wickedness, and hear the inviting calls of the gospel with indifference and disgust, will be everlasting inlets of anguish to the soul. How will both the soul and body of every Christless sinner be overwhelmed with agony and seized with eternal consternation, when their final sentence, Depart from me, ye cursed! shall be pronounced. Let me remark, that as glorious and delightful as the doctrine of the resurrection is to saints, so inglorious and dreadful must it be to sinners.

7th. *This subject is precious and profitable to saints.*

By living a few years in these animal bodies, we naturally become attached to them; and it is affecting to think they must shortly decay, become putrefaction, and a mass of vile dust. With secret disgust, and painful sensations our minds turn from the thought.

But in joyful contemplation, the believer with an eye of faith, can look beyond the grave to the resurrection, which will cause an amazing and glorious alteration. Is such a one afflicted with bodily infirmities, pained with acute diseases? Do any bear a weak, decaying body, which retards them in their journey towards the heavenly Canaan? Let such take courage, and not despond. Be comforted and strengthened; for in the resurrection, God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes, and there shall

be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain. Yes, your light and temporary afflictions will shortly be exchanged for an eternal and inconceivable weight of glory.

They who have lost near and dear pious relatives and friends may receive consolation in the view of this subject. Have some of you, my hearers, seen the eyes of such, which once sparkled with life and beauty, rolled in death; that tongue, which once instructed and encouraged, sealed in solemn silence; and the whole frame a lifeless corpse, turning to the food of worms? Console yourselves. At the resurrection, their bodies will be rendered incorruptible, glorious, spiritual bodies, fashioned like unto Christ's own glorious body. Then let divine light illumine your understandings: Let heavenly rays beam with consolation upon your souls.

Christian friends, O! frequently contemplate the wonderful, the delightful, and glorious change your frail, decaying tabernacles will experience in the morn of the resurrection. Extend your thoughts a little forward, what divine and blessed realities are presented! And shall not the prospect of the glories of the heavenly world inspire you with Christian fortitude, under the trials of your pilgrimage state? It is your privilege to be profited here below, in the view of the precious, extatick truths flowing from this subject. Yet a little while, and you will mount triumphing on the celestial wings of a glorified body, soaring for ever higher in degrees of perfection; and with seraphick love, shouting God's praises in endless day. *Amen.*

SERMON XXIV.

MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL ENCOURAGED TO HOLD FORTH VARIETY, AS A PROMINENT TRAIT IN THEIR PUBLICK DISCOURSES.

Matthew xiii. 52.

Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

THESE words the Saviour addressed to his disciples immediately after the delivery of a number of important parables. They seem to have been apart from the multitude; and he demanded of them whether they understood the things he had related. They readily answered in the affirmative, though perhaps too confidently. Christ, however, did not administer rebuke; but his answer tended to show the importance of their being skilled in the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord: Then said he unto them, Therefore, every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure, things new and old.

Now let us attend to a brief exposition of these words. The scribes were at this time the teachers of the Jews, under the Jewish dispensation: and the Apostles, with their successors in the ministry, were to be the teachers of the Gentiles, under the Christian dispensation. Every one of them, therefore, ought to be a scribe well instructed in all things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven. This the Saviour

represented under the similitude of a householder, who has to provide for a large family. Such a one will take care to have a stock of provisions on hand for their supply, to which he will be continually adding those things which he judges needful or useful. Thus the people would depend on the Apostles and other ministers of Christ as stewards of the mysteries of God, who were appointed to dispense to them the bread of life. They should, therefore, carefully treasure up in their understanding and heart, what they had learned; and add to their fund of knowledge continually. by deriving fresh instruction from what they see, hear, and experience. Then they would be able to bring forth old truth, with new observations, illustrations, and exhortations; and to lead the people forward in knowledge, as they made progress themselves. In accordance with these remarks, the apostle Paul addresses his Corinthian brethren in the following terms: Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. Thus we are reminded, That they ought to be diligent, who have not only to be wise for themselves, but to dispense the wisdom of God to others.

These introductory observations serve to show that by the term *scribe*, is to be understood a minister of the gospel. But to be qualified for this important office and station, a man must be taught of God, by having his heart renewed by his holy Spirit, and his understanding richly stored with the manifold truths of divine revelation. Moreover, such a one will bring forth from his extensive store of knowledge, things both new and old, to the people of his stewardship. One great object in his studies and researches, will be to have variety in his instructions.

In the prosecution of the present subject, my design is to exhibit some of the encouragements, and show how important it is that ministers of the gospel

hold forth variety as a prominent trait in their publick discourses. But, while at the threshold, let me remark, that I am not presuming to give directions to those men whose eminent piety, experience, profound erudition, or elevated stations, have rendered them highly venerable. Let me freely confess as it respects my own character as a sinner, or as to my christian walk, I feel myself the least worthy of the ministerial office. Notwithstanding, a humble hope is entertained that the present discourse will prove profitable to both saints and sinners, and even to some in the gospel ministry.

Then let me not waive the point in view; but let it be freely granted, that the kingdom of God is sufficiently large to produce materials for subjects new as well as old; not only for one, or for ten years, but for the longest period of our mortal existence. In general, the field is as vast as the works of creation, providence, and redemption, which God has made known to man; and ideas and motives may be presented as varied and interesting as can be drawn from heaven, earth, and hell. The Lord has not limited those who are called to preach his word, as it respects means of knowledge and excellent attainments; but he has made rich provision and given ample scope for the continued enlargement of all the human faculties, and the improvement of ministerial gifts and talents. As their station is an elevated and important one, which must be supported by a rich treasure and increasing revenue, so an extensive, an unbounded field is furnished to yield copious and permanent supplies. And if any are straitened, it cannot be for the want of means and diversity of objects; but because they will not arise to take an extensive view of the kingdom of God.

It is sometimes observed, that ministers of the gospel should be dismissed from the people of their charge, to take the oversight of some other congregation; and the reason assigned is expediency: as

though they had exhausted the fund of theology, of mental instruction, and Christian edification. Six, or ten years at most, are deemed the extent, that one man should continue steadily as the pastor of any church. But why? Are there not a sufficient variety of interesting texts in both the old and new Testaments? Or has not the Lord provided resources manifold to that extent, that they can be illustrated with variety of manner, of observations, of similitudes, and with a newness of interest? Surely in these there can be no lack, no deficiency. A steward may not be devoted to the service of his master; and hence, imagine he comes short of accomplishing his work: notwithstanding for his delinquency he is to be blamed. But if he be really unable to give himself wholly to his work, he is entitled to pity and compassion. The probable reason, however, why there is a want of variety in the sermons of many, is that they have viewed the study of theology as a science of a very limited range. They do not take an extensive survey of that wide and divine field which is presented before them. They do not well consider how intimately connected is the economy of nature with the economy of redemption; and that it is the same God, that contrived the system of nature, who is also the author of eternal salvation to all that love and serve him. But it is unquestionably unbecoming for a divine, or for any man, to overlook or to undervalue any of the modes, by which the divine Being is pleased to make known his nature and perfections to mankind.

If we consider the system, or study of theology in its most extensive sense, in its relations to the supreme Being, to his past and present dispensations of the human race, to the present circumstances and future destiny of man, and to the physical and moral condition of all the sentient and intelligent beings of which we have any intimation, we must view it as the most varied and comprehensive of all the sciences; as it embra-

ces within its compass all the other departments of useful knowledge both human and divine. All the moral arts and sciences may be considered as having a direct bearing on theology as the grand central point; and as having a certain tendency to promote its important objects. Religion rightly understood, never disdains to derive her supports and illustrations from the resources of science and the system of nature; for the investigations of philosophy into its economy, are only inquiries into the plans and operations of Deity. Moral philosophy especially, ought always to consider it as her highest honour to walk as a hand-maid in the train of that religion, which points out the path to eternal bliss. And it should not be considered as in opposition to true religion, nor in hostile array to vital piety; for philosophy and religion should march hand in hand to the portals of immortality. Geography and geology, history and chronology, anatomy and physiology, astronomy and philosophy, do all come within the province of the divine; for scriptural facts may be the more extensively illustrated from those arts and sciences, which serve to elucidate the works of God, exhibited in the system of nature. These subjects are highly favourable to the promotion of the important objects of religion, and they present materials, that ministers of the gospel may be neither barren, nor unfruitful; but always abounding in the work of the Lord, by bringing forth from their manifold and increasing treasure, things both new and old.

2d. *Ministers of the gospel may be encouraged to introduce variety in their religious instructions, from the consideration that it is so well calculated to excite and interest the attention of their hearers.* They are called to address intelligent beings, whether saints or sinners, who have capacities capable of enlargement and of great attainments. And the Lord has endued them with such active principles in the very constitution of their natures, as are most readily excited by new

subjects. The experience of every age, and the observations of every class of men, bear testimony to this fact, that novelty and variety are highly requisite in order to arouse the attention, not only of the more ignorant, but even of the more intelligent class of mankind, and to excite them to make progress in the path of moral and intellectual improvement. The principle of curiosity which appears at a very early period of life, and which the variegated scenery and novel objects of nature tend to stimulate and to gratify, instead of being depressed and decried as it relates to the things of religion, ought to be encouraged and cultivated in the minds both of the old and the young. It is a principle which God himself has implanted in our natures for wise and important purposes, and requires only to be chastened and directed in a proper channel, in order to become one of the most powerful auxiliaries in the cause of religion, and of moral and intellectual improvement. To gratify this principle, and to increase its activity, the Creator has adorned our globe with a combination of beauties and sublimities, strewed in endless variety over all its different regions. And as the system of nature in all its parts presents a boundless variety of scenery to arouse the attention and to gratify the desire for novelty, so the revelation of God contained in the sacred records, displays a diversified combination of the most sublime and interesting subjects and events. And as the scenes of nature and the scenes of revelation are thus wonderfully diversified, in order to excite the attention of intelligent beings and to gratify the desire for variety, so we have every reason to believe that the scenes, objects, and dispensations which will be displayed in the heavenly world, will be incomparably more grand and diversified. When we consider the immensity of God's universal kingdom, and the numerous systems, and worlds, and beings comprehended within its vast expanse; and that the ener-

gies of creating power may be for ever exerted in raising new worlds into existence, we may rest assured that the desire of variety and novelty in holy intelligences, will be completely gratified throughout an endless succession of existence; and that the most luxuriant imagination in its boldest excursions, can never go beyond the reality of those scenes of diversified grandeur which the heaven of heavens will display.

But away heated imagination, and violent enthusiasm! Should not ministers of the gospel beware, lest they instil into the minds of their hearers a vain curiosity, and excite an itching ear? Truly my hearers. But the most effectual method for this, is that they excite in their minds a laudable curiosity, and thus prepare the way for sound doctrine. A rich diversity of topicks from the pulpit would afford manifold excitements to rouse this principle into exercise, and to direct the mind to the contemplation of the marvellous word and wonderful works of God. What encouragement then, for every minister of the gospel to be zealous to bring forth from an inexhaustible treasure things both new and old!

3d. *If ministers of the gospel would hold forth variety in their publick discourses as a prominent trait, their conduct would be in accordance with the divine economy in the revelation which God has given to man.* Not only does the face of nature exhibit boundless variety, and the heavens bespangled with stars; but the volume of divine truth also exhibits the same diversity of scenery. And is it not becoming the heralds of salvation, to endeavour in some feeble degree, to become imitators of the author of their messages? Certainly, it cannot be denied, that in the writings both of the Old and New Testament, as in all the other displays and manifestations of the Almighty, divine perfection and Providence are exhibited in the most diversified aspects. And now let some of the facts, events, and transactions, which are recorded for our

instruction, be briefly noticed. I shall quote the particulars as arranged in the Christian Philosopher, by Thomas Dick; to which work I am not only indebted for ideas on this subject, but also for a number of whole pages. He observes, We have recorded a history of the creation and arrangement of our globe; of the formation of the first human pair; of their primeval innocence, temptation, and fall; of the arts which were cultivated in the first ages of the world; of the desperate increase of human wickedness; of the building of the ark; of the drowning of the world by a universal deluge; and of the burning of Sodom by fire from heaven. We will now pass to the account of the origin of languages; of the dividing of the Red Sea; of the journeying of the tribes of Israel through the deserts of Arabia; of their conquest of the promised land, and their wars with the nations of Canaan; of the corporeal translation of Elijah from earth to heaven; of the manifestation of the Son of God in human flesh, the benevolent miracles he performed, and the triumphs he obtained over all the powers of earth and hell. We are here presented with the most interesting and effective narratives, elegies, dramatick poems, and triumphal songs; with views of society in the earliest ages of the world, when the lives of men were prolonged to nearly a thousand years; with splendid miracles performed in the land of Egypt, in the wilderness of Horeb and in the field of Zoan; when the sun and moon stood still in their habitation; when the waters of the great deep were divided, and mountains shook and trembled at the presence of Jehovah. We are favoured with the history of the glorious marching of a whole nation through the deserts of Sinai, under the guidance of a miraculous pillar of cloud and fire; of the visits of celestial messengers and the visible symbols of a present Deity. We are addressed with prophetical delineations of the present and future condition of the race of Adam; with descriptions of

the power, wisdom, love, and majesty of the Almighty, and of his operations in heaven and earth; and with the results and bearings of the economy of redemption. Divine songs, odes, and hymns, composed by angels and inspired men; maxims of moral wisdom, examples of sublime eloquence, of strength of reasoning, and of manly boldness of reproof; and proverbs, parables, allegories, exhortations, promises, threatenings, and consolatory addresses, are promulged with abundance of variety of manner, and peculiar occasions and circumstances. In short, in the word of God we have detailed, in the greatest and most interesting variations, history, antiquities, voyages, travels, philosophy, geography, natural and moral science, biography, arts, epick poetry, epistles, memoirs, delineations of nature, sketches of human character, moral precepts, prophecies, miracles, narrations, wonderful providences, marvellous deliverances, the phenomena of the air, the waters, and the earth. The past, the present, and the future scenes of the world are all blended together in one vast, harmonious system, without artificial order; but with a majesty and grandeur, corresponding to the style of all the other works of God. Moreover, we cannot deny but that they are calculated to interest and gratify the principle of curiosity; and to convey reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, and to make the man of God perfect and thoroughly furnished to every good work.

Now, since the book of nature and the book of revelation; since all the manifestations of the Creator in heaven and earth, are characterized by their sublime and diversified aspect, let me ask, Why should not the ministers of the gospel be imitators of God, in displaying the diversified grandeur of his kingdom of providence and grace, before the minds of those whom they profess to instruct? Why should they confine their views to a few points in the Christ

tian system; to a few stones in the fabrick of the Divine operations, when a wide and unbounded prospect lies before them? Why should they not rather attempt to rouse the moral and intellectual energies of mankind from the pulpit and press, by exhibiting the boundless variety of aspect which the revelations of Heaven present, that men may learn with intelligence and devout contemplation to meditate on all the works of the Lord, and to talk of all his doings? By enlarging and diversifying the topicks of religious discussion, they would have it in their power to spread out an intellectual feast to allure and gratify every variety of taste. The young and the old, the learned and the unlearned, yea, even the careless and the ignorant, the skeptical and dissipated, might be frequently allured, by the selection of a judicious variety of striking and impressive objects and descriptions, to partake of those mental enjoyments which might ultimately issue in the happiest results. The man of an inquisitive turn of mind, who is wont to throw every thing aside that has the appearance of religion, on the account of its dulness to him, might have his curiosity excited and gratified amidst an interesting variety; and from perceiving the bearing on the great realities of religion both for the present and future state, might be led to serious inquiry after the path that leads to immortality. In a word, to associate and intersperse the arts and sciences, and every department of useful knowledge with divine subjects, is to consecrate them to their original and legitimate ends, and to present religion to the minds of men in its most sublime, and comprehensive, and attractive form, corresponding to what appears to be the design of the Creator, in all the manifestations he has given of himself, in the system of nature, in the operations of Providence, and in the economy of Redemption.

It may be replied, That the Lord has given a revelation to mankind in view of what they are, and not

of what they ought to be; therefore he was graciously pleased to grant one suited to their fallen condition. But is it not the duty of ministers of the gospel to address them as intelligent beings who have sinned, and not merely as those who have never transgressed? Are they not in some measure to follow that diversified and divine pattern which God has put into their hands as a guide and rule for their imitation? Or shall mortal man presume to be wiser than his Maker? Because God gives mandates and law to all the holy and exalted beings that surround his throne, is he the less capable of discerning what instructions, methods, means, and ways would be the most suitable to be unfolded to the inhabitants of this lower world? Or because his ambassadors are here on the ground, and see with what a wicked and rebellious race they have to treat, shall they pretend to be wise above what he has written, by greatly retrenching and circumscribing his communications? Can they teach their King knowledge, and learn him wisdom? As his understanding is infinite, his omniscience would certainly enable him to foreknow what things would be best to be revealed to our apostate race, dead in trespasses and sins. Doubtless he who gave existence to the inhabitants of the earth, and who implanted in them the various principles of their animal, intellectual, and moral natures, could determine what things would be the most favourable and effectual to arouse their energies, excite their attention, and to awake them to a solicitous inquiry concerning divine and eternal realities. And some of the varieties and glorious novelties which God has not been ashamed, but pleased to have recorded in his holy word, have been named. And what an interesting variety would be presented, were they chosen as the foundation of religious and publick discourses! This is one great and important end for which they were revealed to man. They are dispersed throughout the sacred pages, and are

so valuable that men should seek for them as for hidden treasures. But especially we may be led to see, that if ministers of the gospel would hold forth variety in their publick discourses as a prominent trait, their conduct would be in accordance with the divine economy as manifested in the system of revelation.

4th. *The particular examples of holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; of the Saviour and the Apostles, and many eminently worthy ministers of the gospel, may be held up for imitation as an encouragement to a variety of topicks and illustrations in the discharge of the ministerial office.* The writings of Moses are extensive not only as historical records, but they are a rich fund from which may be derived abundant instructions, relating to social, civil, and religious life. Besides those laws and regulations which were peculiar to the Jewish nation, a great variety of important rules are laid down to direct us in the various pursuits of life, and in the more immediate duties of religion. The Psalms of David are full of piety, and an almost continual scene of devotion; but how marvellous for their abundant variety of interesting subjects! The Proverbs of Solomon are a continued series of diversified texts, relating to worldly concerns, to the propriety or impropriety of human conduct, to moral principle, and to a godly or ungodly life. Isaiah and Jeremiah abound with beautiful and sublime varieties. The Saviour is the most interesting preacher, both as it respects temporal concerns and Christian morality, and those more solemn truths which immediately relate to eternity. Perhaps some may be ready to imagine the apostle Paul was averse to a variety of subjects in the preaching of the word, because he declared to the Corinthians, I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. This expression shows that the Apostle considered his great work and main business to be the preaching of the gos-

pel: And that in the expounding of the old Testament, in his conversation and sermons, he aimed to prove that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah, who was to come and be offered as a sacrifice for sin. And the more effectually to accomplish this great object, he avows, I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God. By the expression, "whole counsel of God," is not to be understood merely the five Calvinistical points; but that as he had opportunity, he unfolded all the great and important doctrines and duties of Christianity. The writings of this great Apostle of the Gentiles, and his avowal, I am made all things unto all men, that I might by all means save some, may serve to evince his variously extended views in relation to the subject now under consideration.

Now it may be replied, That the life of one man is far too short to exhibit all the varied subjects of some of the sacred historians, much more to endeavour to bring forward the varieties of all of them. Then as they have opportunity, let them abound with an interesting variety, and be imitators of those whom God holds forth as worthy examples. In the present age, some imitate the goodly prophetical and apostolical examples; and instead of having all their ministerial instructions confined within a very small compass, take a wide range as it respects their subjects and illustrations. And yet there is room for others to expatiate in the divine field, and to collect rich materials to add to their treasure. How much of it is still uncultivated; but which will unquestionably be improved as a foundation for religious discourses and a means of accomplishing the various ends of the ministerial office. Then let us, my brethren, be encouraged to hold forth an interesting variety as a prominent trait in our religious discourses, as we are presented with many manly, glorious, and godlike examples.

5th. An extensive variety in publick discourses, is

the method best calculated to repress vice and promote virtue. One important object in the topicks and discussions from the pulpit, is the present good of community. The temporal welfare of individuals, of families, and society, demands the attention of Zion's watchmen; for a proper management of worldly concerns and the morals of a people, are intimately connected with the important duties and interest of the gospel. Hence, vice in all its deformities and destructive tendencies, must be depictured; and the beauties and beneficial results of virtue, strikingly delineated. But in order to this, appropriate discourses are highly important. And a sermon on morality should not be a rare thing, a phenomenon; but a portion of almost every discourse should be of such a nature. If a minister but once a year address his people on the subject of morals, and that discourse be a declamatory moral harangue, they will not be much impressed nor benefited. But if his discourses be frequently interwoven with Christian morality, they will believe him serious and interested in the truths he delivers; and virtue and vice will not be considered as empty names. However I very well know that some professors of religion, and even deacons in the church, imagine that sermons on morality are almost useless, if not detrimental to the cause of religion. Their souls are pained, and they hang down their heads whenever they hear a text named of a moral nature. But let us query: How can they read their Bibles without being much grieved at heart? How can the multiplicity of moral texts be but grating to their feelings? Can they not discern them? Then they must have exerted all their moral faculties to have shut their eyes. But what would such have? Truly, if the sermons of their minister accord with their views, they must be all comprised in a small rotine of fundamental and doctrinal points; and an additional one containing their whole Calvinistical creed, as the climax of their di-

vinity. If such have indeed tasted the delights of renewing grace and redeeming love, how much is it to be lamented that they have not their hearts enlarged! From a false zeal of contending for the fundamentals of religion and of being pillars in the church, they may render themselves a burden to their brethren and stumbling blocks to the world.

What a contrast in the views, preaching, and life of the Saviour, that great and divine teacher of morality. He not only delivered the most weighty messages relating to eternal realities, but he inculcated all the moral virtues and went about doing good; granting healing to the sick, hearing to the deaf, sight to the blind, and administering to the temporal wants of men. And did the divine Redeemer, whose great object was to be the physician of souls, do well to become the physician of the body, and to discover a lively interest for the present well-being of man? Then let not his ministers think they demean themselves to copy his worthy and glorious example. Shall objects of pity and charity have no claim to their addresses and pleas from the pulpit? Are there no afflicted suffering widows, whose hearts the irregularities of a husband have broken? No half famished orphans whom the indolence, intemperance, or excesses of a father have reduced to want? Surely society burdened with manifold evils, cries aloud for help from the discourses of the minister in the pulpit, and in his volume of sermons. Then let the varied topicks of Christian morality have their due weight and share in the publick discharge of the ministerial office.

6th. *If ministers of the gospel bring forth an interesting variety in their religious instructions, they will do much for the promotion of useful knowledge among the people of their charge, and for building up the church in the most holy faith.* An ingenious and intelligent minister has it in his power greatly to enlighten the congregation, over which he may be appointed a pastor. And if

his subjects be wisely chosen, they will be of such a nature and variety as will tend to enlarge the views of his hearers, to excite a spirit of inquiry, and to instruct them in many useful and important truths. Moreover, piety will be encouraged and promoted; for believers must grow in knowledge in order to their growth in grace. Thus an enlightened and faithful minister will be a burning and shining light in the midst of his people, who, from his extended views, will be enabled to take an extensive survey of the kingdom of God. And the man who connects the different departments of knowledge, and the discoveries of science with his prospects of God's universal dominions and government, can with his mental eye, traverse the different regions of the earth, and penetrate into the most distant and retired recesses where human beings have their residence. He can contemplate and adore the conduct of divine sovereignty, in leaving so many nations to grope amidst the darkness of heathen idolatry; can trace the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, as they gradually arise to illumine the benighted tribes of men; can realize in some measure, the glorious and happy scenes which will be displayed in the future ages of time, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ; and when the everlasting gospel shall be published, and its blessings distributed among all who dwell upon the face of the earth. With his mental sight he can view the planetary worlds, and survey far more spacious globes than ours; peopled with a higher order of intelligences, arranged and superintended by the same almighty Sovereign, who doth according to his will among the inhabitants of the earth. With enlarged views he exclaims, Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can show forth all his praise? A gospel minister, who bringeth forth from his treasure things new and old, renders his people highly exalted in point of privilege; for they have

an important aid in acquiring new and interesting ideas, and in enlarging their views of the works of creation, providence, and redemption. But how different the prospects of those who have a religious teacher, that is confined to a narrow circle in his publick discourses. Sameness must be a peculiar trait in his instructions; and with a few exceptions, the people of his charge will have contracted and illiberal views. Whilst they make but little progress in divine or useful knowledge, they will verify the saying, Like priest, like people. And indeed how strangely ignorant are the majority of some congregations respecting the various doctrines and duties of Christianity, and other important and interesting truths closely connected with them. The range of subjects to which the minds of some professing Christians seem to be confined, may be comprised within the limits of five or six chapters of the New Testament. And how very narrow and limited are their ideas respecting the universal kingdom of Jehovah, and the range of his operations! The views of some individuals are confined chiefly within the limits of their own parish; or at fartherest, extend only to the sensible horizon, which forms the boundary of their sight. Within this narrow circle, all their ideas of God, of religion, and of the relations of intelligent beings to each other, are chiefly circumscribed. What may be the nature of the vast assemblage of shining points which adorn the canopy of their habitation, and the ends they are destined to accomplish in the plan of the Creator's operations, they consider as no part of their province to inquire. There is a certain narrowness of view and principle of selfishness that pervade the minds of many professors of religion, which lead them to conclude that if they can but secure their own personal salvation, they need give themselves no trouble about the glory and extent of the kingdom of the Most High. What need we care, say they, about nations in the far distant

parts of the world, and about the divine works in the planets and stars; our business is to attend to the spiritual interests of our souls. But such persons seem not fully to understand in what salvation really consists, and what is conducive to their spiritual growth, nor to appreciate those tempers and habits which will qualify them for the enjoyment of eternal life. It forms but a very slender evidence of their being the children of God, if they wish to rest satisfied with the most scanty and vague conceptions of his works; and if they do not ardently aspire after a more enlarged view of the greatness and glory of his empire, and of whatever may tend to expand their conceptions of the inheritance of saints in light.

But how great the influence of a gospel minister over the minds of the generality of his hearers, either to render contracted or to enlarge their views; to render them bigots, or to cause them to abound in all Christian and useful knowledge. If the pastor feed his flock from all that richness of provision which the great Shepherd, in his abundant fulness has provided, instead of having leanness sent into their souls, they will enjoy a feast of fat things. Each one will have his portion of meat in due season; while the whole will be edified and sanctified. Then what encouragement for ministers of the gospel to hold forth variety as a prominent trait in their publick discourses.

7th. The beneficial influence on the minds of young people, should be viewed as an encouragement and powerful excitement for the bringing forth of things new and old, in the religious instructions from the pulpit. If an extensive variety of topicks should be introduced into the publick discourses of the sanctuary, by connecting the manifestations of Deity in the system of nature, and the discoveries of science with the objects of religion, it would have a tendency to allure the attention of the young to religious subjects, and to afford mental entertain-

ment and moral instruction to intelligent minds of every description. And certainly every wise and well instructed scribe must feel a lively interest in so gaining their attention, as to excite them to an inquiry of the great things of the kingdom. Are youth the peculiar hope and encouragement of a minister's usefulness? Then they certainly claim a particular regard in the choice of his subjects and illustrations. But variety and novelty are highly favourable to attract the notice and impress the minds of the rising generation. Are young persons generally fond of reading novels? And are they much in quest of new things? Then let singular texts and subjects be occasionally chosen and elucidated; that they may be led to a perusal of the holy scriptures in view of the marvellous things therein recorded. Doubtless if a suitable portion of the manifold varieties, singular events, and wonderful phenomena of divine revelation should be judiciously illustrated from the pulpit, many young people, from a laudable curiosity, would be incited to hear the word preached with readiness, and would eagerly peruse the sacred volume for entertainment and instruction. Does the Bible abound with such a variety of novelties and divine wonders only to be read, and not to be the theme of gospel heralds? Do not the age, the active principles, and dearest interest of children and youth, in a special manner require that they derive a due portion of food from such nutritive provision? I am well aware that some may be ready to reply, Young people are so thoughtless concerning religious subjects, and so bent on the vanities of youth, that they should be addressed with subjects of the most pungent and alarming nature. But is it not a fact that the generality of youth do frequently have their minds much exercised about the concerns of their souls? Moreover, does not a continued series of doctrinal and terrifying subjects serve to impress on their thoughts that the duties and essence of reli-

gion are very much of a gloomy and disconsolate nature? Then may they not only hear discourses of the most solemn import, and observations of a very striking nature, but let the varied peculiarities and beauties of the gospel be delineated; that Christianity be not presented to their youthful and tender minds in a forbidding aspect, but in its most attractive charms and lovely forms. Would a minister of the gospel be influential and useful among this important class of his hearers, let his conversation and sermons evince his respect for them, and manifest his solicitations for their present and future well-being. Let them not only be affectionately reproved and warned, but let them be encouraged, animated and drawn by all the varied motives and excitements which can be derived from the volume of divine truth. Their youthful days and vigour of life, their golden period of existence, plead for an interesting variety in the instructions of their pastor.

8th. In order to enlarge congregations and build up society, it is highly important that ministers of the gospel hold forth variety as a prominent trait in their publick discourses. The beneficial effects resulting to Christian society and to community from an extensive range of subjects well chosen, and from a variety of apt illustrations, are numerous; and that of the satisfaction and enlargement of the people of a minister's charge, is of great consequence. There are the learned and the unlearned, the diligent inquirer after truth and the slothful, the moral and the immoral, within the limits of almost every parish; and there is a rich plenitude in the divine word, from which something may be brought forth appropriate to their diversified taste and circumstances. And in scattered and broken societies, how essential that the instructions of the sanctuary have an interesting variety; that the people be built up, and not broken down! But how often, and indeed how justly is the complaint made, that there is a great sameness in

the topicks and discussions of the pulpit! How many in the ministry have all their subjects comprised within a very small circle, and their illustrations quite limited! And, on the same account, comparatively few enter the threshold of the sanctuary: hence, ministerial usefulness is greatly restricted. What next? The feeble church is deprived of their pastor. It is doubtless true, that in many places, different sects and indifference to a preached gospel, cause societies to be in a divided and broken state. Moreover, it is equally true that in many places where few assemble together on the Lord's day, respectable congregations might be collected by a scribe who would hold forth variety as a prominent trait in his publick discourses. It is a matter of fact, that a certain number of texts and topicks are so frequently introduced by ministers of the gospel, that when one of them is named, no small part of the congregation wish themselves home, or else invite sleep. Then let new texts and new subjects be introduced, as often as those that are old; and this variety will prove a remedy for such lamentable effects. Let ministers generally select some of the varied and interesting texts which have not yet been discussed in the sanctuary; and the expressions, "singularity and curious minded," will not fall from the tongues of the illiberal and illiterate. Since God, in the course of his Providence, has disclosed to the present age a far more expansive view of the glory of his kingdom than former ages could obtain, for the purpose of illustrating the revelations of his word, shall not proportionate advances, and suitable improvements be attempted? Who will dare assert, that the scribe who has access by his studious efforts, to contemplate this wondrous scene and its rising grandeur, and yet withholds from communicating to the people the increasing displays of the divine glory, does not thereby hazard the divine displeasure? In relation to this point, and the present particular, the

following passage deserves a serious consideration. Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operations of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up. For a minister to be extensively useful in his preaching, it is not only necessary that the people of God hear him, but that many of the impenitent attend his publick ministrations. And unless this be accomplished, one great end of his ministry is frustrated. The text suggests a method of accomplishment. Moreover, the situation and circumstances of hundreds of congregations and feeble churches in our own highly favoured land, plead, though with a disconsolate tone, yet most pathetically, for a minister who will hold forth variety as a prominent trait in his publick discourses.

9th. The promotion of the declarative glory of God, demands that ministers of the gospel publish to mankind things new as well as old, in their delivering his messages. In the works of creation, providence, and redemption, the Lord has been pleased gradually to unfold his perfections and his great and glorious designs. And the advancement of his wonderful works towards their highest perfection, is an increasing display of the divine glory, as it respects the views of created intelligences. And although the material creation wonderfully displays the glory of God, yet its brightest manifestations are exhibited in his moral kingdom. Whatever tends to a more enlarged display of the wonderful works and ways of God, tends to the furtherance of this great and glorious end: hence, angels and men are instrumental in promoting the work. And the Lord is pleased to see his gospel heralds take a wide range in their survey of his empire, and to proclaim his manifold works, and his varied mighty acts to all his subjects. If they attain but a scanty view of his doings and rehearse a contracted portion of his ways, they eclipse the glory of his great name. But if they expatiate in the various territories of his vast dominions, and

with their enlarged views, promulge their newly discovered wonders, they are the honoured agents of promoting the declarative glory of God.

The present age is wonderful for improvements in the various arts and sciences, and glorious in relation to the advances and honour of the intellectual world. How do interesting and useful inventions abound! How varied the works of man which are wonderful to behold! And would not the Lord be delighted to have the remaining hidden glories of his holy word discovered and brought forth to the view of the sons of men? Surely his name would be magnified among the people, if their admiration should be duly excited by the exhibition of new and divine things; and by beholding the manifold and increasing wonders of his kingdom upon earth. Will the whole world be peopled before the end of time? And will not the whole volume of divine revelation be preached before that period? Doubtless every interesting text in the sacred scriptures will be selected as a foundation for religious instruction in the house of God, before the archangel shall proclaim, That time shall be no longer. Then why should not the ambassadors of God now aspire to give glory to him, by bringing forth new texts, manifold subjects, and variously improved exhibitions of divine truth? There are thousands of interesting and admirable propositions contained within the pages of the divine canon which are yet to be the themes of benevolent invention, of new ideas, and of newly modified illustrations to the ministers of the gospel. Much of the holy scriptures is yet to be more thoroughly explored and more fully understood, besides the prophetical parts. And must it not be for the declarative glory of God? Must it not be pleasing in his sight to behold the expositors of his holy word, humbly but zealously engaged to unfold more and more of its glorious contents? Shall it yet be said, That the children of this world are in their generation wiser

than the children of light? Does not the declarative glory of God, demand of the present age that the investigations and discoveries of the manifold wonders of his kingdom, should equal the inventions and improvements of the political and intellectual world?

10th. The immortal interest of a vast number of human beings may serve to show how important it is that ministers of the gospel should hold forth variety as a prominent trait in their publick discourses. The great end of divine revelation and the preaching of the word as it relates to man, is his eternal salvation. Hence a most important inquiry naturally arises, How should the word be preached so as to be instrumental in saving the greatest number of human beings? But the various particulars which have been adduced in this discourse, do tend to make it evident that an extensive and interesting variety of religious subjects would have the most favourable tendency to promote the immortal interest of man.

It may be replied, some ministers who have not been noted for an extensive scope and variety of discourses, have been instrumental in winning souls to Christ. Grant it. But, if an interesting and extensive variety of subjects had been held forth as a prominent trait in their publick instructions, it is highly probable that their congregations would have been greatly enlarged, and more souls converted under their ministry.

Again: It may be remarked, That some ministers of eminent talents, and whose sermons have been peculiar for variety, have had but little success as to any apparently saving effects from their labours. Let me answer, Their discourses may have had a general deficiency of striking, evangelical, and most important truths; or they may have been deficient as it respects a life of prayer and devotedness to God.

An instance of any salutary effect from an excitement of curiosity, may be demanded. Zaccheus, from a laudable curiosity to see the Saviour, ascended a sycamore tree, and the same day salvation came to his house. And the relation of christian experience, in thousands of instances, attest similar glorious results.

One important design of revelation was to be an exposition of the manifold works of God, exhibited in creation and providence; to explain their nature, and to show to man the agency, purposes, wisdom, and goodness of the supreme Being, in their formation and government. Thus explained and thus illuminated, they become means of knowledge very extensive and eminently useful. Hence, in those places where the manifold doctrines, duties, and truths of divine revelation have been most extensively and strikingly exhibited to the minds of men, there has the greatest number of souls been savingly converted as witnesses of the marvellous grace of God in the glorious effects of an interesting variety in the preaching of the word. If divines of the present day should only follow the footsteps of those who have gone before them, their sermons would tend to confound rather than to convert their people. The interest of Zion, and the salvation of multitudes of our fallen race, call loudly upon them to bring forth from their treasure a variety of things new and old, proportionate to the rising wonders and additional glories of the present age.

By a continued repetition of a certain series of subjects on a few points of divinity, instead of the being of an occasion of additional joy to the angels of heaven in view of the conversion of sinners, there would be ground for seraphs to weep. If ministers of the gospel do not search for varied and interesting truths new and old as for hid treasures, and bring them forth to the view of their hearers, must they not be unfaithful, and guilty of the blood of souls?

Surely the perishing condition of impenitent sinners, the bleeding cause of the Redeemer, the prosperity of Zion, and the immortal interest of a vast number of human beings, may serve to show how important it is that ministers of the gospel should hold forth variety as a prominent trait in their publick discourses.

INFERENCES.

1st. We may see that it is highly important for ministers of the gospel to pay particular attention to their style in their publick discourses. As they generally have great variety of hearers, it should be plain, easy to be understood by common capacities; and it should be elegant, so as to interest the most refined mind. To have one part of the congregation leave the house of God, complaining of the obscurity and bombast of a discourse; and the other part, of its vulgarity and ungrammatical sentences, is a melancholy circumstance. Or to have a people extol an abundance of flowery expressions in a sermon, of a continued series of tropes, figures, and metaphors, is an effect equally lamentable. Hence, words should be acceptable and style interesting, in that manner which is the best calculated to draw the attention of hearers to the subject for instruction, and impress their minds with a sense of the important truths delivered. The great object of a minister of the gospel should be, so to please his hearers with language as most effectually to excite in them a lively and deep interest in his discourse. And the chief end of an interesting variety of words and sentences, should be the same as that of an interesting variety of subjects; viz. the promotion of the great and important objects of divine revelation. Moreover, as it is by words that thoughts and sentiments are conveyed to the understanding and conscience, so these should be aptly chosen that they may communicate the particular ideas and truths designed. It

is laudable for ministers of the gospel to bestow pains to find out words agreeable to the minds of their hearers, provided they be suited to convey divine truths in the plainest and most convincing manner. They are honourably employed, if they copy the example of the wise and royal preacher, by seeking out acceptable words, even those of uprightness and truth, set forth in the most forcible and persuasive arguments in order to lead men to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. If, indeed, divine truths be exhibited in suitable language, with variety and in their purity, they will prove a source of peace, comfort, and consolation to saints; but of disquiet, terrour, and remorse to sinners. Hence, says the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Thus when the preaching of a minister is not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, it becomes a divine sword with two sharp edges, penetrating where no other sword can reach; for it lays open to the view of men their secret thoughts and intentions, even their most hidden purposes, and sins long forgotten, as naked and open to the eyes of him with whom they have to do. Moreover, the most solemn and glorious realities of eternity may be discussed in a manner so indefinite, and with a style so languid as not to interest the attention either of saints or sinners. But let the same divine truths be exhibited with striking words and energy of expression, some will fill the souls of believers with extatick joy in view of the unspeakable glories of heaven, and others would pierce the conscience and heart of the impenitent, forcing convictions and alarms upon the most haughty and obstinate, and presenting a hell with devouring flames near to their view. How great

the power of language, and how highly important for ministers of the gospel to pay particular attention to their style in their publick discourses!

2d. We may see that it is highly important for ministers of the gospel, to attain an interesting manner in the delivery of their publick discourses. Eloquence in the proclaiming of the glorious truths and narrations of the word of God, is highly favourable to the promotion of the same great and desirable ends, as a good style and an interesting variety of subjects. Indeed, without an engaging or interesting delivery, the most ingenious and striking discourses generally make but little impression. How many thousands of excellent sermons have served only to lull one part of the congregation to sleep, and to render stupid those that were awake; because they were delivered in an enervate and monotonous manner! But if a speaker be eloquent, though his discourse have no peculiar merit, he commands attention; and his illustrations commend themselves with weight to the minds of his hearers. And the talent of oratory is not merely to excite the passions; but to convey light to the understanding, to penetrate the conscience, and affect the heart. Though mankind may feel indifferent, and have their thoughts roving to the ends of the earth, when an ordinary speaker addresses them with the most heavenly and divine messages; yet, who is not interested, who is not eagerly drawn to the subject, when rhetorical sounds vibrate on the ear? Shall it be deemed highly necessary for lawyers and statesmen to be eloquent men? Surely it is as much more important for ministers of the gospel to be eloquent, as the well being of man for eternity is more important than his well being for time. And does not the present age, in a special manner, demand of them much attention to rhetorick? The number of orators among other professions, the advancement of the Redeemer's

kingdom, the glorious prospects of saints and dreadful prospects of sinners, should urge ministers of the gospel and students of divinity, with unwearied exertions to improve their voice, and attain an interesting manner in the delivery of their publick discourses. If a man be eloquent, he has the power of being extensively useful; for he will collect, or obtain a large congregation, and have opportunity of preaching to many saints and sinners. Moreover, it is a fact that many worthy ministers in these United States, have but a few attend their ministry, and scarcely receive a scanty support; because they have not the gift of an interesting delivery in the pulpit. How many more respectable congregations might soon be collected, and ministers comfortably and promisingly settled, if there were a supply of those who are truly eloquent. But the days of youth are far the most favourable for acquiring the talent of a natural and interesting delivery of a discourse; and if young men who hope to become ministers of the gospel, do not zealously and perseveringly improve this golden period with a view to this very important attainment, they will have lasting and painful regret and repentance for their presumptuous and criminal negligence. If a most impressive, most animating, or most alarming sermon be delivered without an easy and interesting address, eternal realities are made to appear at a great distance: But if divine truths be gracefully and forcibly exhibited, a holy God, a heaven and hell seem near at hand. How great the effect of ministerial eloquence to make men believe and realize the varied and interesting truths of divine revelation! And what minister of the gospel, that prays for eminent usefulness, must not ardently pant for eloquence. Thousands of arguments relating to this particular, begin to crowd upon my mind; but I must forbear. Surely the few things suggested will serve to show the encouragement,

and how highly important it is for ministers of the gospel to attain an interesting manner in the delivery of their publick discourses.

3d. We may see that it is highly important for ministers of the gospel to be men of profound erudition, and of study. Unless their information be extensive, and they give all diligence for higher attainments in useful knowledge, they will be unable to bring forth things new and old, so as to exhibit an interesting variety as a prominent trait in their publick discourses. It is generally granted that they should be men of eminent piety, whose souls and lives should be devoted to the work of the ministry; but the same arguments that would show that their Christian experience should be extensive and their walk exemplary, would make it evident that other extraordinary gifts and acquirements would be highly important. How can a minister instruct and edify his hearers, unless he shall have made greater proficiency, and have superiour skill in those things which do particularly relate to his profession? He should not only study to have a conscience void of offence in the sight of God, but he should be enabled to perform his ministerial services as one whose qualifications would recommend him to a people as their teacher. In accordance with this sentiment the apostle Paul addresses Timothy, Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Thus Timothy was enjoined studiously to endeavour to approve himself in the sight of God in his conduct and ministrations, and to exhibit himself by his performances as a skilful workman, who understood his business, and who would not be put to shame by having his work examined. Moreover, a large number of the inspired penmen do exhibit indubitable evidence not only of their being devoted to the service of the Most High, but also of their being men, who had acquired a rich fund of varied and useful

knowledge both human and divine; and whose souls panted for more extensive acquirements, and more enlarged views in regard to the wonderful scenes of creation, providence, and redemption.

And if ministers of the gospel in the present age, have not a good foundation laid for mental and theological improvement, and if they be not men of study, their people must be fed with old provision; nor will they be refreshed by him with running and living streams: but they must hunger and thirst for the rich dainties of the gospel through his deficiency and negligence. How lamentable for a gospel minister to trust to his former attainments as an inexhaustible fund, from which to derive constant supplies. Instead of giving himself wholly to his work, he may be said not to give himself to it at all. His illustrations will be general and vague; and the people of his charge, for new things must hear a continued repetition of old; and instead of experiencing the varied blessings of an interesting variety of publick discourses, and a corresponding style, they will participate the contrary effects, the judgements of a barren and unfaithful minister. Although the ways and means of improvement are manifold and the objects unbounded, still with assiduity must a man improve them, in order to replenish his own mind and to be capable of instructing others. If the education, the reading, and the contemplations of a divine be superficial, his instructions will be but chaff instead of wheat. What man upon earth does it become to be diligent in his vocation more than a minister of the gospel? Who sustains a station more elevated than he? or has a more important trust committed to his charge? How important for him, then, profound erudition and close application to study.

4th. This subject should be improved by Christians and by all men, as an excitement to a spirit of liberality, of candour, and of accuracy, in the judge-

ing of the opinions and actions of men, and of the divine procedure and operations. And that they may derive much light to see how important it is to be thus influenced, permit me to close this discourse with remarks on the subject from the Christian Philosopher. Who is the most candid and liberal Being in the universe? God. And why is God to be considered as the most liberal intelligence, that exists? Because he embraces a minute, a full and comprehensive view of all the circumstances, connexions, relations, habits, motives, temptations, modes of thinking, educational biases, physical affections, and other causes that may influence the sentiments or the conduct of any of his creatures.

Who among created intelligences may be viewed as endued with these qualities in the next degree? The loftiest seraph that God has created, who has winged his way to numerous worlds, and taken the most extensive survey of the dispensations of the Almighty, and of his creatures and events.

Who among the sons of men, is the most illiberal and inaccurate in the judgeing of opinions, of persons, and of things? The man who has lived all his days, within the confines of his native village; who has never looked beyond the range of his own religious party; whose thoughts have always run in one narrow track: whose reading has been confined to two or three volumes; who cares for nothing either in the heavens or the earth, but in so far as it ministers to his convenience, his avarice, or his sensual enjoyment; who will admit no sentiment to be true, but what he may have heard from his own parson; and whose conversation seldom rises beyond the slanderous remarks which are circulated among his neighbours. Persons of such a character are entirely unqualified for forming a correct judgement, either of the sentiments and actions of men, or of the works and the ways of God; for they are devoid of that information and those principles, which are requisite to form

a rational decision in relation to either of these subjects.

It may be admitted as a kind of axiom in our estimate of human character, that in proportion to the ignorance and narrow range of view which characterize any individual, in a similar proportion will be his want of candour, and his unfitness for passing a sound judgement on any subject that is laid before him. Moreover, the man who has taken excursions through the widest range of thought, accompanied with a corresponding improvement of his moral powers, will be the most liberal and candid in his decisions on the moral and intellectual qualities of others. To these maxims, few exceptions will generally be found. In forming an enlightened judgement in regard to any action or object, it is essentially requisite that we contemplate it in all its different features and aspects, and in all its minute circumstances, bearings, and relations. On the same principle, it must be admitted that he who has viewed religion in all its aspects and bearings, who has taken the most extensive survey of the manifestations of God and of the habits and relations of men, is the best qualified to pronounce a candid and accurate decision on all the intellectual and moral cases that may come before him. And if the spirit of these sentiments be founded on fact, it will follow that the more we resemble God in the amplitude of our intellectual views and benevolent affections, the more candid, and liberal, and accurate will our judgements be in reference to all the actions, objects, and relations we contemplate.

On the other hand, the man who is confined to a narrow range of thought and prospect, is continually erring in the estimates he forms, both in respect to physical facts, to general principles, and to moral actions. He forms a premature and uncharitable opinion on every slander and report against his neighbour. He condemns without hesitation, and

throws an unmerited odium on whole bodies of men, because a few of their number may have displayed weakness or folly. He hates and despises men and their opinions, because they belong not to his political or religious party. He pronounces his decisions on the motives of men with as much confidence as if he had surveyed their hearts with the eye of omniscience. He cannot hear an objection against his favourite opinions with patience, nor an apology for any set of principles but his own. He is arrogant and dogmatical in his assertions, and will make no concessions to the superiour wisdom of others. He sets himself with violence against every proposal for reformation in the church, because his forefathers never thought of it; and because such innovations do not suit his humour and pre-conceived opinions. He decides in the most confident tone, on what God can and cannot do, as if he had taken the most perfect survey of infinite perfection; and he frets at the divine dispensations when they do not exactly correspond with his own humour and selfish views. Moreover, he vainly imagines that he is better qualified to pronounce a decision on the varied topicks of divinity, than all the philosophers and divines, and all the brightest geniuses who have ever appeared in the world, though he cannot but confess that he never gave himself the trouble to examine into such matters. His views of the providential dispensations of God, are equally partial and distorted. If disease, or poverty, or misfortune, happen to his neighbour, especially if he had withdrawn from the religious party to which he belongs, it is considered as a penal judgement for errour and apostacy. If prosperous circumstances attend his family or religious party, it is viewed as a sign of divine approbation. He seldom views the hand of God except in uncommon occurrences; and then he imagines that a miracle is performed, and that the wheels of nature are stopped in order to accomplish the event.

He seldom looks beyond the precincts of his own church or nation, to observe the movements of the divine footsteps toward other tribes of his fallen race. He overlooks the traces of divine operation, which are every moment to be seen above and around him: and yet, in the midst of all such partial and contracted views, he will sometimes decide on the wisdom and rectitude of the ways of God with as much confidence as if he had entered into the secret councils of the Eternal, and surveyed the whole plan of his procedure. Such are a few prominent outlines of the character of thousands whose names are enrolled as members of the visible church, and whose illiberality and self-confidence are owing to the contracted notions they have formed of God and of religion. And surely it must appear desirable to every enlightened Christian that every proper means should be used to prevent rational, immortal beings from the remaining enchained in such mental thraldom.

On the other hand, the man who takes an enlightened view of all the works and dispensations of God, and of all the circumstances and relations of subordinate beings, readily acquires a nobleness and liberality of mind, and an accuracy in the judgeing of things human and divine, which no other person can possess. He does not hastily take up an evil report against his neighbour; for he considers how unfounded such reports often are, and how much they may be owing to the insinuations of envy or malice. And when he can no longer doubt of an evil action being substantiated against any one, he does not triumph over him in the language of execration, for he considers all the circumstances, relations, feelings, and temptations with which he may have been surrounded; and he considers that he himself is a frail, sinful creature, and might possibly have fallen in a similar way had he been placed in the same situation. He does not trumpet forth the praises of a man who has performed one brilliant benevolent

deed, as if he were a character to be admired and eulogized, while the general course of his life is marked with vice and an utter forgetfulness of God and religion: nor does he fix a stigma of immorality upon the person who may have acted foolishly or sinfully in one or two instances, while the general tenor of his conduct has been marked by purity and rectitude; for in both cases, he considers that it is not a single action, but general habits which determine the character of any individual. He esteems the wise and the good, and holds friendly intercourse with them, to whatever political or religious party they belong. He can bear with affability and candour, to have his opinions contradicted; and can differ from his neighbour in many disputed points, while at the same time he values and esteems him. He will not brand a man as a heretick or deist, because he takes a view of some opinions in theology in a different light from what he himself does; for he considers the difference of habits, studies, pursuits, and educational prejudices which must have influenced his opinions; and makes due allowance for the range of thought to which he may have been accustomed. He is disposed to attribute the actions of others to good motives, when he has no proof of the contrary. He uses no threats or physical force to support his opinions, or to convince gainsayers; for he knows that no external coercion can illuminate the mind; and that the strength of arguments and the force of truth, can alone produce conviction. He is convinced how ignorant he is, notwithstanding all his study, observations, and researches, and presses forward as long as he lives, to higher degrees of knowledge and of moral improvement.

And such a man is an active promoter of every scheme that tends to enlighten mankind, and meliorate their condition, and extend the knowledge of salvation to the ends of the earth; for he considers that it is not by miracles, but by the subordinate

agency of intelligent beings, that God will effect the illumination, and moral renovation of our apostate race. He views the hand of God in all the movements of the scientifick, the political, and religious world; and perceives him accomplishing his purpose in the inventions of human genius, and in the economy of the minutest insect, as well as in the earthquake, the storm, and the convulsions of nations; for he considers the smallest atom, and the hosts of heaven, as equally directed by eternal wisdom, and equally necessary in the universal chain of creatures and events. He displays a becoming modesty in the speaking of the ways and works of God. When he meets with any dark and afflictive dispensation in the course of Providence, he does not fret and repine; but is calm and resigned, conscious that he perceives only a small portion of the chain of God's dispensations, and is therefore, unable to form a just comparison of the connexion of any one part with the whole. When he contemplates the depraved and wretched condition of the greater part of the world at present, and for a thousand years past, notwithstanding the salvation which has been achieved for sinners of mankind, he is far from arraigning the divine goodness and rectitude, in leaving so many nations to walk in their own ways; for he knows not what relation this dismal scene may bear, what influence it may have, or what important impressions it may produce on worlds and beings with which we are at present unacquainted.

Moreover, a man of such enlarged views is cautious in the pronouncing decisively respecting the dispensations of God, in regard to the universe at large. He does not, for example, assert with the utmost confidence, as some have done, that there never was, and never will be to all the ages of eternity, such a bright display of the divine glory as in the cross of Christ. He admires and he adores the condescension and the love of God in the plan of

salvation which the gospel exhibits, and feels an interest in it far beyond that of any other special manifestation of Deity; but he dares not set limits to the divine attributes and operations. He considers himself at present, with regard to the grand system of the universe, in a situation similar to that of a small insect on one of the stones of a magnificent edifice, which sees only a few hair-breadths around it, and is altogether incapable of surveying the symmetry, the order and beauty of the structure, and of forming an adequate conception of the whole. He considers that he has never yet surveyed the millionth part of Jehovah's empire, and therefore cannot tell what the eternal Sovereign has been pleased to exhibit in its numerous provinces; and least of all, can he ever presume to divine into the depths of interminable ages, and boldly declare what the Almighty will or will not do, through eternity to come. He therefore views it as presumption, while he has no dictate of revelation for his warrant, to pronounce decisively, either on the one side or the other, of such a deep and important question, which seems above the reach of the loftiest seraph to determine. In short, he endeavours to take a view of all the manifestations of Deity within his reach, from every source of information which lies before him, and as far as his limited faculties will permit. He does not call in question the discoveries of science, because they bring to his ears most astonishing reports of the wisdom and omnipotence of Jehovah and the boundless extent of his kingdom; but rejoices to learn that the grandeur of his dominions is actually found to correspond with the lofty descriptions of divine majesty and glory recorded in the volume of inspiration, and is thereby inspired with nobler hopes of the glory and felicity of that heavenly world, where he expects to spend an endless existence.

If, then, such be some of the features in the charac-

ter of the enlightened Christian; if liberality, and candour, and accurate investigation mark the judgements he pronounces on the sentiments and the actions of men, and on the works and the ways of God; and if such views and feelings ought to be considered as more congenial to the noble and benevolent spirit of our religion than the narrow and distorted notions of a contracted mind, it must be an object much to be desired, that the mass of the Christian world would be led into such trains of thought as might imbue their minds with a larger portion of this spirit. And if diversified and occasional discussions on the topicks to which we have adverted, would have a tendency to produce this desirable effect, it is obvious that such branches of knowledge as are calculated to enlarge the capacity of the mind, and to throw a light over the revelations and the works of God, should no longer be overlooked in the range of our religious contemplations.

With such striking remarks and noble sentiments of an eminent man and highly distinguished author, my discourse and volume are concluded. *Amen.*

THE END.

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

EXPLICATIONS OF THE TERMS

NATURE AND LAW.

APPENDIX.

EXPLICATION OF THE TERM NATURE.

THE term *nature*, includes all the works of creation which revelation and philosophy make known. Or nature, taken in its utmost extent, embraces the whole compass of things in the universe, whether corporeal or mental, physical or moral.

The phrase, *works of nature*, is frequently used. By the works of nature we are to understand the works of Deity, which exhibit wisdom in them all; which manifest design, order, and harmony. Or the works of nature are the works of creation, which bear evident marks of intelligence and proclaim a God.

The course of nature is a phrase which is used in a great variety of senses. The planets and all the revolving luminaries of which we have any knowledge, perform their circuits according to a course of nature. The sun so constantly performs his course; or more strictly philosophical, the earth perpetually and statedly revolves round its axis, according to a course of nature; and the moon also revolves on its own axis, and around the earth according to the same course. The varieties and regularities of times and seasons, the re-production of plants of the same kind from their original seed, and the propagation of animals of the same species, are said to be produced according to certain courses of nature. But what are we to understand by the phrase as thus used, and as used in various other ways? The most eminent philosophers and divines have been, and are still divided in their ideas and writings concerning the subject. One class maintain, that the courses of nature in all their diversified forms, are effected by the immediate hand of Deity, in a regular and stated manner; or that the works of divine Providence are only the works of creation carried on to their final completion. That is, that God immediately and positively exerts his power in every effect or movement, not only of the heavenly bodies, but also in the smallest matters that pertain to this earth, even to the fall of a sparrow.

Another class conclude, that the Lord created all things with certain inherent properties and principles, by which all events and effects are produced in a certain uniform manner, without the assistance of his immediate interposing hand. They account for the regularity of the heavenly bodies in their courses, and of the principle movements pertaining to this earth, upon the laws of attraction and gravitation; and for the succession of the animal and vegetable kingdoms, by peculiar natures and principles given, by which they are re-produced. These inherent laws or properties they consider sufficient to effect what is called a stated course of nature. If we embrace either of the above sentiments, we may justly revere and adore the efficiency of the God of nature. How sublime the thought, that the hand of Deity is immediately present, directing all his works! Or how momentous the reflection, that the Great First Cause created all things with such properties and innate laws, as to effect what we behold in the manifold stated courses of nature.

The expression, *human nature*, is frequently used and in various senses. In its most general import, it is designed simply to point out a human being as far different from the animals of the earth, and also from other beings. Human nature is sometimes mentioned in an exalted point of view; and at others, as in a state of degradation. On the one hand, human nature has great dignity stamped upon it; as man is a being of noble powers, capable of endless progression and exaltation. Thus truly elevated and dignified is human nature.

But on the account of the fall and depravity of man, how debased his nature. In this view how perverted! consequently how humiliating!

Man may be said to act according to his nature, whether he conduct in a degrading or honourable point of view. When he debases himself by his conduct, he acts according to human nature in a fallen depraved state. But when his actions are truly manly and noble, he acts according to human nature as viewed in a state of dignity and honour.

It is said to be the nature of animals, to perform certain actions necessary to their preservation and comfort. The true import of this expression is, that animals are endued with certain instinctive principles, which excite them to do those things that are the means of their support and enjoyment, and that antecedent to instruction or experience. At the end of time, it is said will be the dissolution of nature. Some conclude that this phraseology implies, that the material system will be consumed and annihilated. The more probable opinion is, that the elements will then be dissolved and newly modelled: that they will be formed into a system vastly different and far more perfect, beautiful, and glorious than the present; suited to the great change that human beings will experience; and be the glorified state to which the righteous will be exalted.

The study of nature is frequently recommended to man. Nature in this view, is the same as the works of creation. And the term, *study*, implies an investigation of the laws and properties both of matter and of mind. A boundless field, suited to the noble and endless progressive powers of man. As he has a nature capacitated for improvements without end, so the works of nature are vast as immensity. And when he shall enter another state of existence, with enlarged and glorified attributes both bodily and mental, he will find nature, or creation, newly formed, inconceivably more perfect and glorious; a boundless prospect adapted to his enlarged, exalted, and glorified powers.

EXPLICATION OF THE TERM LAW.

It is worthy of remark, when this term is used an agent must necessarily be presupposed; for a law is strictly a rule, according to which some intelligent being acts, or by which he prescribes actions to others. Or, a law may be considered either as a rule of action, or as an established and constant mode of process. This word is used in a great variety of senses, natural, civil, and moral. Some authors suppose they may all be included under two general heads, natural and moral; those which refer to body or matter, and those that refer to mind or intelligent beings. But they are generally divided into three classes: divine laws, human laws, and the laws of nature.

The divine laws are those that result from moral fitness, and which are essentially the same in all their requisitions in every part of the universe; or those that are contained in positive precepts, and made known by revelation. By moral fitness we are to understand the propriety of those obligations that result from the moral perfections of God, and from the relation of created intelligences to him as the Author of their existence and of all their comforts; and from their varied relations and situations in regard to each other. In what part soever of the universe, created intelligent beings exist, these moral ties are necessarily and unchangeably binding; and demand supreme love to the Supreme Being, and perfect obedience to every duty which reason and the moral faculty point out. Finite intelligences, even without a written law or any particular immediate revelation, are bound by these obligations. Hence, such a state is generally called a state of nature; and the law that is particu arly suited to such a state, is denominated the law of nature. Revelation has its commencement where reason and conscience are insufficient to make known to created inte ligent beings, those duties which the Lord seeth proper to enjoin upon them. Therefore, the laws of divine revelation comprise the mandates necessarily included in the moral law; and they also contain positive precepts, suited to the particular situation of those to whom they are promulged.

By the civil law, or law of the land, we are to understand those rules and regulations that relate to civil society, and exist between man and man. This is the using of the phrase in its most extensive import; for it includes both the laws resulting from civil communities, and those that spring from a state of nature. They point out the rights of mankind in their various situations and relations as individuals, or nations; and also in various degrees and forms, make known the means of attaining and defending their rights.

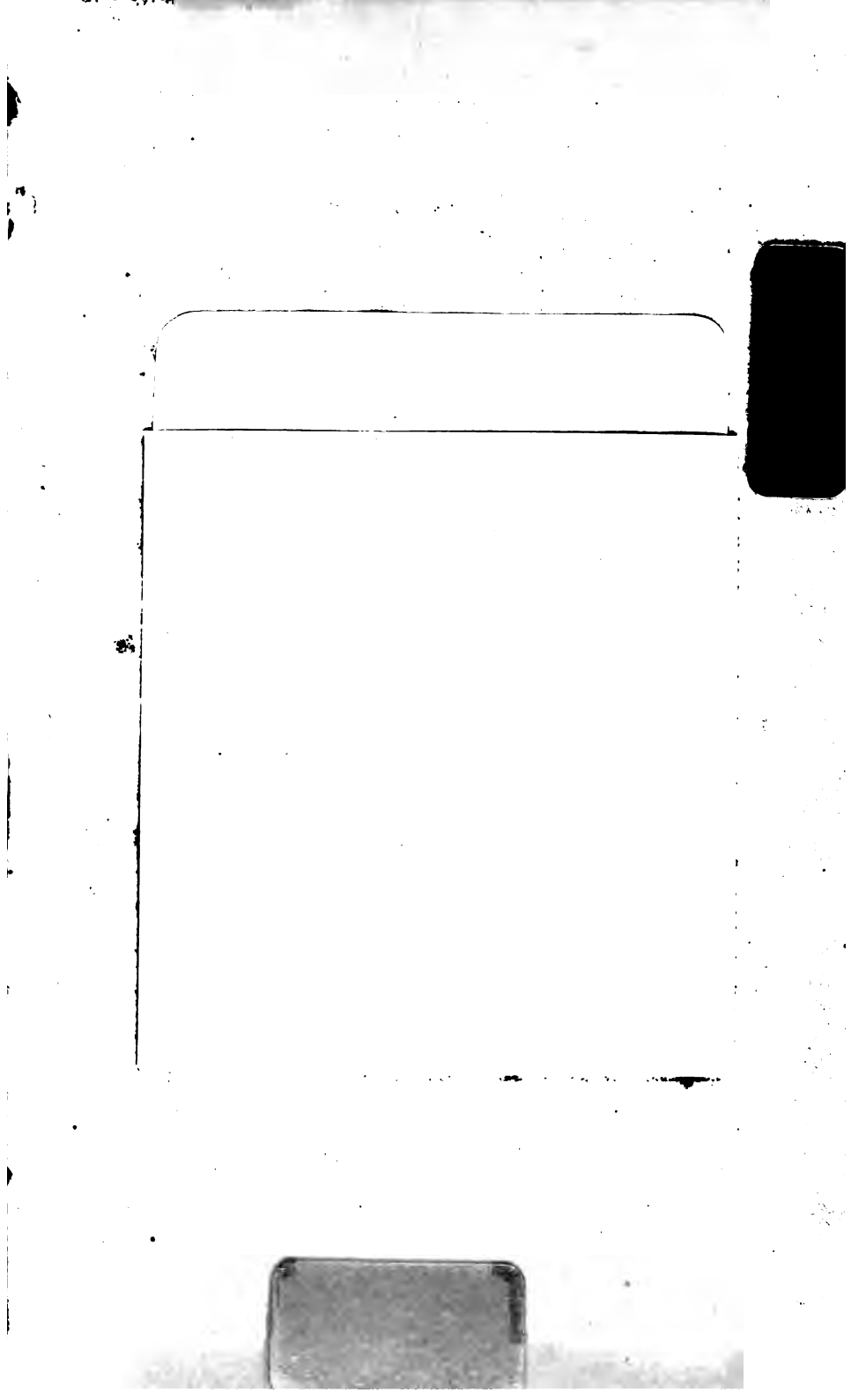
The law of honour is styled a system of rules constructed by people of fashion, calculated to facilitate their intercourse with one another, and for no other purpose. This law can scarcely be ranked among the civil laws. It may be said to belong to human laws, as it is a regulation of human beings. What I would remark concerning the system of this law, is, that it is a compound of manly virtues and degrading vices; demanding certain courses of conduct truly noble, and admitting actions scandalous.

A law of nature may be defined to be a uniform and established course of operation and events of some particular kind. Or, by the laws of nature are to be understood the stated courses by which the great First Cause directs the works of providence. It is said to be by a law of nature, that the primary planets revolve on their own axis and round the sun, respecting him as the centre of their system; and that the secondary planets move round their respective primaries as their centre. By this expression we are to understand that the principles or laws of attraction and gravitation produce such uniform and constant effects, that a deviation would be considered a strange phenomenon, a miracle. The regular and constant movements of the heavenly bodies justly excite the admiration of man. But on the account of their having pursued their stated courses since time began, if one of them should stop in its course,

or move in a different direction, it would astonish the world; for a law of nature would be counteracted.

The natural and constant tendency of the bodies in our atmosphere to fall to the earth, is ascribed to a law of nature. The reason is obvious; for the effect uniformly takes place, unless there be a preventing, external power, or a repeling force introduced. With the same propriety the principles or properties of magnetism, electricity, and motion, may be attributed to the laws of nature.

It is said, that by a law of nature the existence of a God is made known to all mankind. This expression imports that the existence of the Supreme Being is so clearly exhibited and demonstrated in the works of creation and providence, as to obtain the belief and acknowledgement of a God among all nations in every age of the world, or to attain the universal consent of mankind.

The essential difference between right and wrong is said to be pointed out by a law of our nature. This declaration conveys the idea, that all men have reason and conscience, which teach them that virtue is amiable and ought to be cultivated; and that vice is odious, and ought to be shunned: That is, virtue and vice are diametrically opposite in their natures; and mankind have powers of mind which enable them to discern their essential difference; and while they feel under obligations to practice the one, they feel bound to refrain from the other.

Parental, filial, and conjugal affections belong to the laws of human nature. These principles appear to exist among all nations, whether in a civilized or savage state, and seem to be innate. Hence, the attribute of natural affection is implanted in the breasts of men, and interwoven into the very principles of our nature by the hand of Deity, to answer important ends in the present state of existence. And as this principle evidently exists in the breasts of all human beings, it may with propriety be denominated a law of human nature.